

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

DEC. 1909



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BY ANNE
WHAGAN

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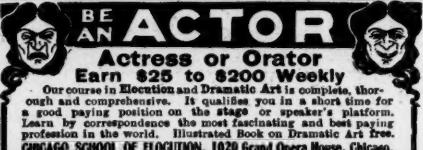
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Vol. X

No. 3

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

DECEMBER

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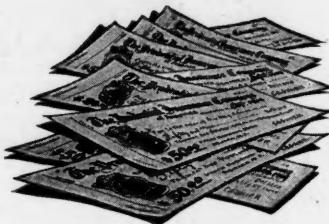
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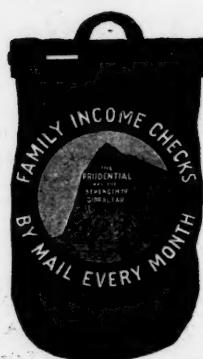
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VOLUME 10

DECEMBER, 1909

NUMBER 3

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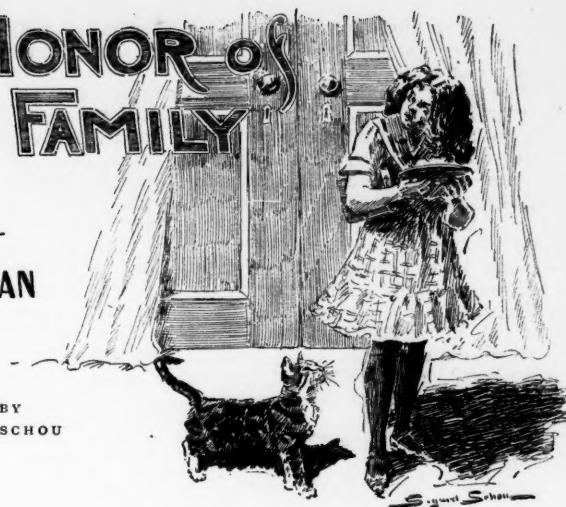
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THE HONOR of THE FAMILY

BY
ANNE O'HAGAN

ILLUSTRATED BY
SIGURD SCHOU



PROLOGUE.

THE room in which the little girl lay, stretched at full length on her stomach upon a shabby, spring-broken sofa in the window, commanded a view of the valley straight to the notch. This afternoon she was not looking at it, however. A book, laid upon the pillow before her, fascinated her. She had no eyes for the early snows that whitened the mountain tops, or for the dull pink that shone over the notch, bringing to an end the brief, gray, autumn day. All her attention was focused upon the tale she was reading, straining her young eyes more and more as the light waned.

The door slammed noisily behind her, and woke her from her dream of wandering with Little Nell through the English countryside.

"Well, Gerty Whitaker," cried a nasal feminine voice, "if you don't beat all! Layin' there on the sofa an' lettin' the fire go clean out on you! An' ruinin' your eyes! Sometimes, I think you ain't got the sense you was born with!"

To the onslaught of the chief abigail of her father's wifeless household,

speaking her mind thus freely, Gertrude made no reply. She opened her lips to speak, but found, to her surprise, that her voice was lodged in her throat. At the same instant, Hepzy, looking sharply up from the door of the stove, into which she was piling big chunks of wood, caught the glint of tears on the child's lashes.

"What are ye cryin' about now?" she demanded, with an exasperated emphasis upon the adverb. "If it ain't one thing, it's another. What is it now?"

"Oh, Hepzy! The little scholar died—the schoolmaster's little pupil!" With her voice came unrestrained tears. She put both hands to her freckled little face and sobbed.

"My lands, but you're a foolish child!" declared Hepzy. "Cryin' about some nonsense in a book! Suppose he did die? He's only make-believe, anyway! Everybody's got to die—you've got to die, I've got to die—your pa—every one! It would suit you enough sight better to be downstairs helpin' me, for them boys that is comin' to rampage over the place to-night than it does to sit here ruinin' your eyes an' blubberin' about things that ain't no concern of yours or mine or anybody

else's. What the summer boarders want to leave books behind 'em for is more'n I can see!"

"What boys?" inquired Gertrude, curiosity drying her tears.

"A pack of them silly college boys. Where your ears been? Ain't your father been talkin' about the freshman banquet for a week? It was the son of that Mis' Custis that boarded here last summer that put the other boys up to it—comin' here, I mean. Do you mean to tell me you ain't heard your pa an' me discussin' it every meal for a week? Don't you know Asel's in the kitchen this livin' minute, gettin' ready to broil the venison? Your pa lets on that no one can broil venison like Asel Babcock—umph!"

"What college boys?" demanded Gertrude.

"Dartmouth boys—that's what. Did you s'pose there was fools to come from farther than forty miles to eat a supper? Though, if they was college boys, they are fools enough for anything, an' would as lief come four hundred, I reckon," Hepzibah added, as an afterthought.

"Why do they come away off here, those boys? Isn't there plenty to eat down at Hanover? And if they wanted to go away, why couldn't they go anywhere—even to Boston?" Gertrude's voice grew low with the awe-struck sense of the infinite possibilities before the Dartmouth freshmen.

"Oh, it's some fool's business about keepin' it secret from the sophomores," explained Hepzibah, with easy contempt. "The sophes think they are goin' to have the banquet at a hotel in Boston, so the one that seen your pa about the arrangements said, 'Well, they'll learn sense by an' by—maybe!'

There was a sound of much laughter, of many swarming feet, in the hall below.

"My land sakes! There they come now—I didn't know it was train time!" cried the housekeeper. "Now, don't you go to moonin' over no more sick little scholars—you jes' sit down an' get your lessons for to-morrow, or you'll be a sick little scholar yourself, your las'

report was a disgrace for a big girl like you, goin' on twelve!"

With this admonishment she stepped briskly out, and as she opened the door into the upper hall, the merry sounds from below came up in a pleasant gust. Gertrude crept after her and held it open an inch or two to catch the joyful riot. A sympathetic smile curved her childish lips.

Hepzibah ran up the stairs again in half an hour.

"You come down an' have your supper in the kitchen—it's all ready," she announced. "There ain't goin' to be no food carried upstairs this night, I can tell you that. An' that lot of waiters your pa got is certainly the worst I ever saw in my life. I don't care what the boys pay, they can't pay for the trouble they're givin'! Come on down, now, an' eat, while I've got a chance to see to you. I ain't got time to sit down myself, an' no more has your pa. But you come along."

Gertrude obediently followed to the big, smoke-darkened kitchen, where, around the great range, two or three people were busy, while the hall and pantry beyond seemed to her alive with waiters—as a matter of fact, there were five. She slipped shyly to the corner of the oilcloth-covered kitchen table which Hepzibah designated as intended for her, receiving Asel's jocular greeting with a smile of pleasure.

To-night he patted Gerty's head absently, and made some perfunctory inquiry as to her books and her supper. Then he advised her to take her gingerbread and apple sauce back to the family's sitting room, whence she had come.

"Kinder busy here for little girls," he told her apologetically.

Gertrude trotted obediently off, her plate carefully balanced in her hand, past the door whence issued the joyous sounds of young men's talk and laughter, songs and whistling. She wished, shyly, that she might see the room, herself unseen. She had already beheld such decorations as her father had supplied, but she wanted to see the college bunting, of which Hepzibah had

spoken, the flags, the colors. However, it was impossible—she sighed, and tip-toed past the door with her sweets.

She had finished them, she had given the geography as much attention as she thought it deserved, and she had read on in "Old Curiosity Shop" to a point where the adventures of Little Nell for a time gave place to the doings of people whom the child regarded as worse than uninteresting—Quilp and his friends. She closed the book, and sat by the stove comfortably warm and dull, when the sound of a scuffle in the hall below reached her. She sped to her door and crept to the banisters, over which she looked. Four young men were down there grappling with a fifth. And the fifth—Gerty's story-inflamed imagination leaped up at sight of him. Although his captors, as the others apparently were, had his arms behind his back, and a handkerchief was about his mouth, he seemed to the little girl a glorious and compelling figure. His hair was sunny, and waved backward from his forehead; the child adored blond hair with the passion which only a little girl with straight, drabbish locks could know. Beneath the smooth, white brow, the victim's eyes flashed magnificently, and he made so manful a struggle, despite the great odds against him, that Gerty said to herself he was like one of Sir Walter Scott's heroes; he was like Ivanhoe, she declared rapturously to herself, in her second of peering.

But, after all, she came of practical stock, despite her beloved tales. And in the hall below her, in the hall of her father's house, a beautiful young man was being maltreated. Moreover, he was being swiftly, and surely, and silently carried toward the entrance door. And he was doubtless being hurt. That was one thing Gerty could not bear—to see things hurt. Wherever she saw pain, her childish instinct was to hurl herself into some action for assuagement of it.

So, now, not measuring the situation or her chances of success in attempting a rescue, she made a swift and unexpected descent of the stairs by the

shortest, silentest route she knew—the banisters. She was in the midst of the abduction party as one member of it turned to open the big hall door. She darted behind him and stood with her back to the means of egress from her father's house.

"You shan't! You shan't!" she screamed in shrill, childish voice. "You shan't carry him out! Why do you hurt him? Why do you tie up his mouth?" The dark eyes above the bandaged mouth flashed a glance of amused gratitude upon her, the other four boys laughed in an astonished way.

"See here, you young baby terma-gant," observed one, "you'd better stand from under." He spoke very softly. It was evident that the kidnappers did not wish to make a noise which would be audible in the noisy dining room. "Get out of the way—there's a good baby—young lady, I mean. I've been brought up, you see, not to lay hands upon women except in the way of kindness, but home training is going to go by the board in about ten seconds, if you don't move."

"Shan't!" announced Gerty firmly. She braced herself against the door, and held her head forward like a belligerent bull. It was quite obvious that her intention was to butt the first comer.

"See here, Howe, don't stand blithering with the baby—get her out," said one of the others—one who was stationed at the captive's feet. "Catch her and throw her out of the way."

"Do it yourself, Sweeney," replied Howe, with an air of distaste both for Sweeney's suggestion and Sweeney himself.

"By Jove, I will!" cried Sweeney, deserting his post.

It was a false move. With one foot and leg freed, the captive managed to deliver the guardian of the other leg a knock from a substantial heel, at the same moment when Gerty lifted up her voice in a wild, shrill shriek for help. The result of both moves was immediate. The youth whose honorable office it had been to prevent one leg from

moving was derelict from duty long enough to nurse a sore elbow; the captive, both feet free again for the second, was struggling with might and main along the hall floor, and the dining-room door opened to emit a group of boys.

"By Jove, it's Sweeney and the sops!" cried some one.

"They've got Blake!"

"Not on your tintype they haven't!"

"They were dragging him——"

"Hold on! Get them! Get them—don't let them off!"

It was a wild clamor, and Gerty did not understand the purport of it. She saw a crowd of a dozen make captive the four bold captors of a few minutes before; she heard delighted taunts: "Did ums want to see us eat our dinner? Ums shall! Ums shall make nice little speeches to amuse us. Ums shall do us dances. You shall dance before Herod the king, Sweeney, old man! And little Howe shall sing and make a joyful noise—oh, yes, you'll attend the banquet!"

"See here, men," called Blake, the handkerchief removed from his mouth. "We're forgetting to thank my rescuer. Behold her!" And piling out of the dining-room door, the laughing boys saw a shy, frightened little girl in an ugly plaid dress, trying to make an unobserved retreat up the stairs.

"If it hadn't been for her, your president would not have presided this night. Thanks are due—Miss—Miss—who-is-it?" he added, turning to the girl with a smile that dazzled her.

"I'm Gerty Whitaker," she said, miserably enough, confused and unhappy beneath the multitude of merry eyes.

"Bring her in, Blake—she's got to be toasted in person! Bring her in—elect her an honorary member of the class," cried some one.

The suggestion met with tumultuous applause. A committee was forthwith named "to escort the lady to the banqueting hall." She was too shy to resist, although the sudden notice made her hotly miserable. She went along with the committee. She was led to the

head of the long narrow table across the head of the room; she saw the bunting, the banners, the lights and flames. She was a little dizzy with it all. Then she was seated, and all the young men stood. One, very laughing-eyed, at the opposite end of the room made a speech; and ended it with:

"I hereby propose that Miss Gertrude Whitaker, whose intervention saved our president's presence here for us to-night, Miss Whitaker, who now blushingly graces the board, shall be elected unanimously and in perpetuity an honorary member of the class of ninety-five!"

"Seconded—seconded——" the cry uprose.

"It is moved and seconded," announced the president, "that Miss Gertrude Whitaker be made an honorary member of the class of ninety-five. All those in favor will please signify it by saying 'ay.'"

A mighty shout of 'ays' arose. "All those opposed, 'no,'" went on young Blake. Silence.

"Three cheers for the new member!" demanded Sweeney, regardless of the fact that he was a mere alien, and a prisoner, at that.

They were given rousingly. And then, with much pomp, Mr. Blake escorted the speechless, overcome little girl to the door, while behind them the boys joyously sang: "For she's a jolly good fellow, for she's a jolly good fellow, which nobody can deny."

"Good night, classmate, and many thanks," said young Blake, giving her his hand at the door.

"Oh, oh—good-by, sir!" faltered Gertrude, and made her breathless way upstairs, and into her own room. By and by, the doors seemed to open, and she heard the stamping of feet into the hallway, a gale of talk and laughter; then came silence for a minute with one person's voice breaking it; then, more melodious than the earlier singing had been, came a song in just a few sweet voices. "Good night, ladies, good night, ladies! We're going to leave you now," a quartette informed her.



A book, laid upon the pillow before her, fascinated her.

Later, they paused outside the house to sing the same thing in a full-volumed chorus. She slipped from her bed, and from an angle in her wall she peered out at the crowd standing in the moonlight and singing, with faces upturned toward the story where she was, the old college song. She thought she recognized the one who stood a little in advance of the others—surely it was he, the bright-haired one, whom she had saved from disaster!

"Good night, lady"—they had made it singular now. Her heart throbbed with pride and pleasure. But they broke off abruptly. A whistle sounded down the tracks; the midnight train which would not stop unless flagged! They ran, pell-mell, across the road, and across the field to the station, and in another instant, it seemed to her, the red-eyed monster had gulped them in his maw, and was tearing on through the night again.

CHAPTER I.

Sylvia Hardenbroeck was one of those rare and astonishing women to whom automobile attire is becoming. Her slender, willowy height carried the shapeless wraps well, and the delicate grace of her neck, the admirable poise of her head, the silky, curling freedom of her ash-brown hair, made floating, silky veils seem a natural covering. She was aware of this fact, as she was apt to be of most facts concerning herself, and to-day she was taking a good deal of solid satisfaction in it. Robert Blake, seated beside the chauffeur of her aunt's machine, turned with flattering frequency toward the occupants of the tonneau, and Sylvia did not need to be a vain woman to consider that he turned to gaze at her rather than at Mrs. Llewellyn, rubicund, portly, and determined-looking, in a blue touring coat that rivaled lightning for metallic harshness and a blue veil that turned her firm cheeks purple. And Sylvia had rather a penchant for Robert, as she frankly and somewhat speculatively admitted to herself at times of self-communion.

They were proceeding with due caution through one of the Harlem streets in which children seemed to spring from the sidewalks into the roadways like corn from a popper, when an old lady, timorous and uncertain, after the fashion of some old ladies, advanced and retreated, retreated and advanced injudiciously, until she came in violent contact with the front of the car. It threw her to one side, and she fell against the curb. Mrs. Llewellyn uttered something that sounded almost like an imprecation when the shrieks of the people on the sidewalks resounded. Griston, the careful chauffeur, whose efforts to avoid destroying infancy had resulted in damage to old age, brought the car to a jerking stop, and he and Robert sprang out. Sylvia, after one little smothered moan, closed her eyes, and leaned back, rather white about the lips.

The old lady was bleeding from a cut in the head, and was groaning from

bruises and shock. The crowd was gathering with many expressions of sympathy for the victim of the accident, and many objurgations for the automobile as a vehicle of travel and for automobilists as a class in society.

"We will get out and wait for you at the nearest hotel," said Mrs. Llewellyn sharply and decisively, "while you take the old woman to a hospital. Where's the nearest hospital?" she added commandingly to the onlookers.

They told her clamorously and variously, and on the whole respectfully, her assurance meeting its customary reward of acceptance, in spite of the present unpopularity of her position. But the victim uttered a firm refusal of the hospital, and added a shriek or two to emphasize it. She wished to die in her own bed, she said.

"Well"—Mrs. Llewellyn's manner was curt—"carry her in to that drug store there"—she indicated one on the corner—"and ring for an ambulance. We cannot spend the day here, since she isn't badly hurt. Ah! There comes a policeman. Officer, do disperse this mob, and take our names and numbers, and do whatever is necessary. The woman is not much hurt, and it was her own fault."

"We'll see about both of those things," announced the guardian of the law. But he obeyed the mandate about dispersing the crowd, inducing it to retire about two yards into the background. The old woman in the meantime announced that she was "killed entirely," that "she'd have the law on them," and that she "would die in her own bed and not in any murdering hospitals."

They succeeded in moving her into the drug store, and the clerk, driving back the crowd and stretching the injured woman on a bench in the rear of the store, said that there was a doctor present who could ascertain the extent of the injuries. The policeman, Robert, and Griston looked around for the doctor, but there was no one in the store but a young woman.

"Miss Whitaker, if you could please look at her," said the clerk doubtfully.

The young woman turned, revealing a plain face, lighted by a pair of kind, dark brown eyes. She looked a little deprecatingly at her audience.

"I'm not a physician yet," she said, "but I am a senior medical student, and I could tell—"

"Go ahead, young lady, until I can call up the J. Hood Wright," said the policeman.

The girl bent over the old woman, probing her frame with gentle, skillful fingers, and reassuring her the while. She washed the cut head and bandaged it.

"There's no great harm done," she turned to the automobilists to say. "Of course, the jar and shock will leave her stiff for a few days." Her large, dark eyes were fixed on Robert's face, and her voice fell away, as though some vague and unexpected sense of acquaintance were upon her. But though he looked at her with polite attention there was no glimmer of recognition in his gray eyes.

"Well, if that's the case," said Mrs. Llewellyn, who had joined the party, "we need not delay any longer. Robert, have you any money with you? One should never motor without it, but I haven't a penny since paying that bridge cormorant down at Hempstead. Do give the poor old woman ten, and tell her I shall call to inquire about her if she will let me know where to find her. I am sincerely sorry, though it was all her own fault. People should know which way they're going when they're crossing a busy street. Ah, Sylvia, are you here? There's very little harm done, and this kind young lady doctor has fixed up our victim. Have you your purse? I've just got Robert to give the old woman ten dollars, but I wish you'd pay the doctor's fee."

"I beg your pardon," said the young medical student, blushing very brightly, "but I am not a doctor yet, and I take no fees. And, anyway—"

"A doctor! Dear me, how interesting!" cried Sylvia, in her languid, pretty way. "How brave of you! I couldn't be, even if I were clever

enough—I cannot bear the sight of pain!"

A little smile curved the other girl's large, generous mouth.

"I think that's the very reason why I wanted to be a physician," she said.

"Ah, you go deeper than I," smiled Sylvia. The young student looked at her with shy, friendly, admiring eyes. She was rather rawboned and awkward herself, and her commonplace, plain clothes accentuated her defects. But it was evident that the sight of other girls' beauty and grace awoke no jealous or painful sense of contrasts in her heart.

The ambulance clattered up, the young physician who swung himself lightly off the rear step confirmed Miss Whitaker's hopeful diagnosis of the case, the old woman was taken to her home on the ambulance stretcher, and the automobilists went back to their machine and on to Westchester.

Robert, who had been talking with Griston concerning the late unpleasantness, turned and addressed Sylvia.

"What nice eyes that girl had!" he said. "Did you notice them?"

"They were nice," said Sylvia, "especially if you have a bucolic taste for kine, and the gentle products of the kine."

He laughed. "Well, I didn't claim that they were of the intoxicating variety," he admitted. "But I thought them very beautiful eyes, indeed."

"Eyes?" snapped Mrs. Llewellyn. "The remarkable thing about that girl I am willing to wager that neither of you discerning, wise-with-all-wisdom young persons never even noticed. Her eyes were well enough—big and honest, and cowlike, as Sylvia suggests. But her hands were beautiful—firm and white, with tapering fingers and flexible wrist and fine-grained skin. Confess, now, neither of you noticed that!"

"I was so occupied in wondering where she acquired the little freckles on her nose," Sylvia apologized for her failure to see the quality of the medical student's hands.

"Of course!"

"And I was watching your masterly reduction of the victim to sweet reasonableness, Mrs. Llewellyn," said Robert. "You parted friends—and she had been eager—even determined—to see you in a prison cell at the beginning! How did you accomplish it?"

"With your ten dollars, didn't you, Aunt Grace?" suggested Sylvia.

"No, not at all. But I understand how to deal with people of that class," Mrs. Llewellyn answered, with much satisfaction. "Just let them know immediately that you won't be imposed upon, and once they understand your position, be perfectly good-natured and amiable with them. Don't you agree with me, Robert?"

"I shall be able to answer you more intelligently later, Mrs. Llewellyn. It seems that Conroy wants to run me for the assembly from our district next fall, and I dare say I shall acquire a good deal of knowledge as to the best treatment of the masses before the campaign is over."

"Politics? Dear me, you must be wealthy!" observed Sylvia. "I thought only the multi-millionaires could really afford politics—that a steam yacht was a cheaper toy!"

"Oh, the Blakes have always made a bluff of having a stake in the county, so to speak," answered Robert. "And the other boys have even less gift than way than I. My father rather wants it, and Uncle Dolf spares me a good deal, as it is, from the conduct of his affairs."

"The world is growing so good, and so weighed down with a sense of its high responsibilities," complained Sylvia, "that soon I shall have no one left to play with me!"

"You'll have to become serious with us, and to play the new game of being terribly concerned about civics or ethics or something."

"Imagine me in the rôle of an earnest woman!" cried the girl, laughing. "Can you picture me upon the suffrage platform?"

"Heaven forbid! I should have to deny myself your acquaintance! You

know where my mother stands on that question, don't you?"

"The leader of the antis, is she not? Well, she wouldn't cut me, would she, if I felt a conviction that I could make the world a brighter, better place by depositing a ballot in a box? Just reflect—you and your lady mother—how advantageous my aid would be to you in those elections that are coming in the fall!"

"Yes, but your intelligent and discriminating vote in my favor would be neutralized by the vote of the lady whom it was our misfortune to run over, and perhaps by the Juno-eyed young doctor's."

"Juno-eyed!" scoffed Sylvia, seizing upon the last thing in his speech. "Never! There's nothing of the mighty queen about that girl."

"I was only thinking of the remnants of my classical education," he explained. "It seems to me that the Junonian epithet was 'ox-eyed' or something of that kind, wasn't it?"

"By Jove!" he cried. "I have just thought of something. I think I know the ox-eyed doctor lady! What did that little red-haired drug clerk call her? Miss Whitaker, wasn't it? And her face haunted me with the suggestion of something which I knew all the time! She belongs—or belonged—back Hampshire way, Miss Hardenbroeck. She saved my life, so to speak, once. Why, she's a classmate of mine!"

"A classmate? Was Dartmouth co-educational?" asked Sylvia, with lively curiosity.

"Oh, no! An honorary classmate." He ran on with the story. "And to think of that little baby challenger of the forces of the enemy being a doctor in New York! I must tell Sweeney that. You've met Sweeney, you remember, Mrs. Llewellyn?"

"Is he the big, underbred man you brought in to tea one afternoon last winter?" demanded the lady directly.

"He is the young manipulator of the Chicago pig market whom you wanted to meet because of his Napoleonic stunts out West," corrected Robert, laughing.

"It's the same man," agreed the lady composedly. "He was a dreadful person—a perfectly dreadful person."

"He was rather impossible—but not uninteresting," drawled Sylvia. "And so the young doctor is the daughter of a New Hampshire innkeeper! May I be thoroughly bromidic, Mr. Blake, and call your attention to the fact that the world is a very small place, after all?"

"Small enough for us to be at home already," called out Mrs. Llewellyn, as the car ran up before the door of her Westchester house. An attentive servant was at the steps helping her out. It was a service Robert performed for Sylvia.

"Sometimes I wish it smaller," he said, in a low voice. "Sometimes I could endure it, if its population were limited to two persons—and a few retainers."

"Ah! You'd soon want a population of voters," Sylvia reminded him, laughing. But her eyes, the color of golden Tokay wines, were bright with pleasure and invitation.

CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Llewellyn prided herself upon being a practical woman. Her boudoir she gloried in as being expressive of the plain and positive cast of her nature. It was, in truth, as straightforward and practical an apartment as her husband's dressing room across the hall from it.

"The other dressing rooms in the house are as full of fripperies as the decorator chose to have them," she was in the habit of explaining.

"But, my dear Mrs. Llewellyn!" he cried, when I told him exactly what I wanted, 'you will make it look like the directors' room of the South Seacoast Line, which we have just finished; very handsome and appropriate for a directors' room, but for a lady's boudoir—' 'My dear man,' I told him, 'that's just what I want. I am a director—I'm a practical woman, managing a large amount of business every day—more than directors of your Southern Seacoast will manage in a fortnight, I

warrant, if they're all like Godfrey Wilson, the one I know—and I want a directors' room for my boudoir.' Well, I got my room as I wanted it!"

It was to this chamber that she summoned Sylvia on the morning after the motor trip out to Hilltop. She had read her letters, drunk her coffee, eaten her toast, noted various directions for her secretary, interviewed her housekeeper, and generally attended to what she considered a fair volume of work before she sent for her niece. Her hair was trim, her morning gown characteristically handsome and serviceable, and she was particularly and overpoweringly wide awake and competent in her bearing.

"Miss Hardenbroek's compliments, and she will be here in a few minutes, ma'am; she has not breakfasted."

Mrs. Llewellyn repressed verbal but not facial comment as she looked at the clock above her fireplace. The hour was eleven.

Sylvia drifted in, by and by, her ash-gold curls pinned high on her head in most admired disorder, her gown of apricot crêpe and lace all that was charming and perishable, her little mules of gold tissue very entrancing, expensive, and unenduring, her delicate face pink from sleep and bath, but with a faint hardness under the rosy color, as though she had set her features and her mind against some anticipated unpleasantness.

"Good morning, auntie," she said, dropping a kiss upon Mrs. Llewellyn's coiffure. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting."

"That is all right, my dear," Mrs. Llewellyn was pleased to observe. "Miss Oakley isn't likely to be here much before twelve to attend to my correspondence, and what I have to say will not take half an hour."

"Dear Aunt Grace!" murmured Sylvia, half laughing. "It is going to be a lecture, then!"

"Not much of one. Call it a reminder. How much have you a year, of your own?"

"Why, you know as well as I do. I have three thousand."

"Yes, I know, but I had begun to think that perhaps you were forgetting!"

"It's something that doesn't permit itself to escape one's recollection," answered Sylvia, with a little tinge of bitterness under her calm tone. "Though you, Aunt Grace, and Aunt Mabel, have always done a great deal to make me forget it." There was civil, but not warm, gratitude in her voice.

"Neither of us has been able to do what we should like, Sylvia," answered Mrs. Llewellyn kindly. "We should both have been glad to treat you exactly like a daughter, settlement and all. But neither of us has any money of her own."

"Aunt Grace!" cried Sylvia, in a stifled voice. Her face was crimson. "How can you? Do you think I have looked forward to legacies? Oh!"

"Now, Sylvia, don't, for Heaven's sake, indulge in heroics! If you haven't looked forward to the future, you should have done so, and I am talking in this fashion in order to make you do it now. Do you know what it would cost you to live in the style to which you are accustomed?"

"No," muttered Sylvia sullenly.

"About thirty thousand a year," announced Mrs. Llewellyn concisely. "Of course, I don't mean to say that you cost us that, or anything like it. We have to keep up the establishments, anyway, and you cost very little—a negligible quantity. But it would require an annual expenditure—and mighty judicious expenditure, too—of thirty thousand a year upon an original investment of Heaven knows what for you to continue living as you're accustomed to live."

The girl's eyes were rebellious as she lowered her lids against her aunt's scrutiny. Her lip curled in a sneer.

"You are advising me to make haste to capture a rich husband?"

"You are trying to be unpleasant, Sylvia, but I see no particular unpleasantness in facing the truth. It is something I always make a point of doing, myself. I am advising you to consider what you intend to do, instead of

merely drifting into something that you don't intend, and that won't suit you at all."

"Meaning?" asked Sylvia softly and scornfully.

"Meaning, as you are perfectly well aware, Robert Blake."

"For the sake of continuing this interesting conversation, let us admit your premises. Even then, the Blakes aren't beggars."

"No, they're not beggars, and they are a very good family, indeed. There are the four boys and the girl, Lola. You will see, my dear, if you do a little mental arithmetic, that Robert's income will about equal your own."

"Robert is in his uncle's brokerage house."

"Yes—he may make money. Or lose it. It's a maternal uncle—a man named Swan. I don't like his looks. I've met him. But Robert seems inclined to go into reform politics. That will take his interest from the great American game of money getting—and won't advance him much in glory, either, if you come to that."

"The Blakes have always been in public life."

"True. My dear, I concede you every good thing there is to say about the Blakes—with one or two exceptions, to be noted later. I am only telling you—Sylvia, you know what I am telling you! Don't go on with your flirtation with Robert blindly—that's all. If you think you're the sort of girl who would like a quiet, refined, little home in the suburbs, with two maids and a co-operative gardener and furnace man, and the unexcelled company of good books—I am pretty sure you are on the road to secure it. But my knowledge of you for the last twenty-six years doesn't lead me to think that you would really care for it, superior as it is."

Sylvia laughed and arose from her chair, her eyes again bright and amused, her color clear and untroubled, and only the faint suggestion of hardening behind her mouth to suggest any unpleasant thoughts.

"And now, Aunt Grace, dear, I'll tell you a great secret. Since we have discussed the young man's prospects to the uttermost end of the world, I'll confide in you that he doesn't care that"—she indicated the white tip of her rosy, little finger nail—"for your charming niece, and that she also is quite untouched by him. Although you'll admit that he's nice?"

"Quite the most satisfactory young man of my acquaintance, for all purposes but marrying my niece," agreed Mrs. Llewellyn, with business-like heartiness. "And I'm delighted to learn that I had no grounds for my misgivings. When you go out, dear, will you ask Slocum if Miss Oakley has come yet?"

Sylvia kissed the top of her aunt's coiffure again, with a graceful little bending of her long, graceful figure, and glided out of the handsome, serviceable room. In her own apartment she found Slocum, whose services were lent to her when she was visiting Mrs. Llewellyn, and sent her down to summon the secretary, waiting in the library. When the door had closed upon Slocum, she looked with hatred about the exquisite, airy room. She clinched her fists and stamped with her gold-muled feet. An expression of flushed rage and hatred distorted her delicate features.

"I hate them!" she declared vehemently. "I hate them all—arrogant, with their dreadful money! I hate being dependent on them and their whims and their good will! I'd rather do anything—except be poor!"

She caught a glimpse of herself in the long mirror. She hastily cleared her face of its frown, and, going to a Sévres jar of cold cream, she began conscientiously to smooth the ugly lines of temper from her face.

There was no trace of any unlovely emotion upon her when she joined the party at luncheon. Robert found a new charm in her—something simpler, more wistful, than was her sophisticated wont. He rejoiced in the new angle of vision which he had concerning her to-day. As for Sylvia, she

knew, with her faculty for self-knowledge, that she was appealingly effective because the tussle with her anger had left her feeling a little spent and in need of comfort; and also that her looks were of the all-womanly variety because she had done her hair low.

After luncheon, the little house group broke into various divisions and sought various diversions. Sylvia was not inclined for any violent sport that day. She finally thought she would go for a little stroll in the woods—it was so heavenly sweet and mild a spring day! —and would pick wild flowers and read poetry. She knew it sounded like an affectation, she told them frankly, but somehow she thought she would like to try it. That Robert would like to try it in her company was a foregone conclusion. Mrs. Llewellyn looked at them with a half frown as they passed down the drive together.

"I wonder if she's trying the taste of some of the pleasures she would enjoy on their joint income, if they should marry!" speculated the elder lady. "The inexpensive joys of nature and good literature? Or is she merely up to her usual game? Well, I've done my duty by her, and I shall certainly not cease to invite that attractive young man to my house because my niece, who is plenty old enough to know better, seems inclined to play the fool. I hope I know my business as a hostess too well for that."

CHAPTER III.

The graduating class at the medical school—or the women members thereof, to speak more accurately—were holding a farewell dinner at Pasquali's. There were all sorts of girls among them, even knowing ones with a keen discrimination in regard to bohemian restaurants. The finances of the class as a whole were not flourishing, and it had been decided, upon the strenuous advice of these latter, to dine cheaply and with a fine, foreign flavor at the Italian restaurant on the lower West Side. As for Pasquali's viands, even gourmands called them good; and as



Behind them the boys joyously sang: "For she's a jolly good fellow, for she's a jolly good fellow!"

for his wines—those wines which he served with a lambent, brown-eyed innocence of the brutal American necessity for a license to dispense them—there were among them some Italian vintages in which even connoisseurs delighted. That the women of the class of 19—should rejoice in the selection of this restaurant for their farewell banquet was therefore a foregone conclusion.

"Isn't it quaint?" demanded one, with royal disregard of derivations. "I feel positively wicked," confessed a second. "I think it's the straw-covered bottles on the shelves. It's the first time I was ever in any place which could possibly be called a wine shop." "Isn't that call of that boy the saddest-sounding thing you ever heard?" asked another, referring to the tender wail with which the boy at the dumb-waiter shaft informed

the cook that spaghetti was needed above—"pasta per una, pasta per due," and so on. The girl who felt that, since she had studied medicine, she ought to display a hardy masculinity in all her pursuits, took out a cigarette and lit it. Gertrude was sitting beside her and she courteously offered her little straw cigarette case to her. Gertrude shook her head and smiled her refusal, but there was something in the smile—something wise, tolerant, amused—that nettled the smoker.

"Oh, I forgot," she said brusquely, "you are one of those women who think that all the pleasing vices should be left to men."

"Dear child, smoke yourself black in the face, if you like," replied Gertrude, still with the amused smile of a mother who sees beyond the period of the small boy's "showing-off."

"But you do feel that way, don't you?" persisted the other girl, Harriet Watson.

"I'm afraid I have an easy-going feeling that grown people should all do as they please in minor affairs; the ones with brains will come out all right, and the other ones would go all wrong, anyway," replied Gertrude gravely.

The others laughed. Gertrude notoriously carried the shortcomings of her friends upon her shoulders.

"Oh, don't you go badgering Gertrude, Harriet," called an impatient young voice from the head of the table. "She'll up and smite you the first thing you know. You don't realize you're talking to the girl who's won the appointment to the Mothers' and Babies' Hospital!"

"Oh, Lily, why did you?" cried Gertrude, vexed. "You said you wouldn't tell to-night!"

There was a pleasant clamor all around her. Plain, quiet, unasserting, overconscientious as she was, she was nevertheless a favorite with most of the girls who had weathered the three years with her. Their congratulations bubbled around her. Even her competitor for the appointment made agreeable remarks. But the episode spoiled much of her pleasure; she

hated to have her little triumph blared forth at a time when it must make manifest another girl's defeat, and in a place where the other girl would have to bear her defeat openly.

"That means no New Hampshire for you, after all, doesn't it?" asked one, after pronouncing Pasquali's black-bean soup "out of sight," and quickly proceeding to make the saying true.

"Only a few weeks. They want me to start in July."

"You'll never go back there to practice," remarked Harriet, carefully blowing a ring of smoke into the air. "All that fond dream of yours about bringing hygienic sweetness and light into the mountain backwoods might as well be given up now as later. After your two years at the M. and B., you'll do some dispensary work, and then set up an office in a nasty, crowded, smelly district. And you'll work yourself to death for no money at all, and you'll probably be so overcome by the sights of misery and sickness around you that you'll get a grouch against the present industrial system, like Doctor Jane Winslow, and will bloom out into a blooming anarchist. You'll probably end," she concluded, knocking the ash from her cigarette, "by being arrested at an Emma Goldman meeting."

"She'll do nothing of the sort," cried Lily, from the end of the table. "She'll so impress the chief patroness of the M. and B. some day when that *grande dame* is making a silk-lined tour of inspection of the wards that when her grandchild—patroness', you understand—is desperately ill, she will entreat Doctor Whitaker to come and save him. Gertrude will go—just because it's a sick child, not because it's old Madame Moneybag's grandchild—and will save it; and, three years later, she will be fashionable physician to the children of the Four Hundred, with an office on Madison Avenue. Say, Gertrude, will you let me ride in your electric brougham sometimes?"

"Gertrude? Nonsense! Gertrude will marry a man of incipient—"

"Will you all kindly prophesy for yourselves, girls? I only know that I

am going up to New Hampshire next week, and I wish you were all coming with me!"

They had proceeded leisurely and chatteringly and happily through their "pasta" and their skinny birds and their salad to the yellow, foamy *sabayone* for which Pasquali was famed. They had sipped the wine which the organization's president had told them was a gift from her father, himself a physician, who rejoiced in the beginning of his daughter's career, and had a friendly and admiring regard for her classmates. They were all laughing and talking merrily, and Pasquali, who himself always acted as chief waiter to private parties, was smiling sympathetically at their good spirits, when there was a sudden clatter of dishes on the floor above, a frightened outcry—and then the door of the dining room was blocked by a large, blue-coated figure.

"Got you this time, Pat," announced the guardian of the law. "Shoved in behind my man—he had a password or something, so that your feller let him by, upstairs. An' here you are, with the goods on you!" He touched a bottle significantly.

Pasquali was a voluble study in the art of self-defense. He raised protesting, innocent palms to Heaven, he poured forth a fluent set of explanations and appeals. The girls sat frozen with astonishment and fright.

"Sorry to disturb the banquet, ladies," observed the policeman. "But Patsy here has been up for his before—sellin' without a license. Oh, it ain't the first time, not by a long shot it ain't."

In the confusion of slamming doors, cries from the excited Italian patrons upstairs, exclamations and stumblings, the signora appeared, her baby in her arms, from one of the upper rooms. The child screamed in the general clamor, the policeman asked why she hadn't kept her husband out of this kind of thing, some of the patrons tried to make their escape, and were prevented at the upper door, others crowded, with noisy advice, into the

lower dining room, and altogether there was confusion worse confounded. The bold Harriet had thrown away her cigarette, with a sudden picture before her mind's eye of the morning's papers, and Lily never ceased to demand her hat. In the midst of the hubbub the crying of the frightened Pasquali *bambino* mounted to a shriek. The noise was almost unendurable. Gertrude arose from where she, with a grave, startled, inquiring face, had remained sitting, and went to Signora Pasquali's side.

"Let me hold him, won't you?" she said. "I will try to soothe him while you do whatever is necessary for your husband."

Had Signora Pasquali had much less English than she did possess, she could scarcely have failed to understand Gertrude. Anyway, the girl's kind eyes and earnest, half-smiling, half-timid look would have been enough. She placed the heavy boy in Gertrude's arms, and went and said something to her husband, while Gertrude deftly loosened some of the strings that confined the child in a multiplicity of clothes, and crooned softly to him. The unfamiliar face and voice claimed his attention from the excitement that had undone him; he quieted, and lay in the girl's arms, looking up into her face out of dark eyes deep set in layers of white fat. More policemen came from the room above and took the names and addresses of witnesses. They demanded Gertrude's as she stood in the midst of the family party. She gave it calmly enough. Could she be relied upon to show up at Jefferson Market to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, her interlocutor sharply wanted to know. She said yes, that she could; and he seemed to think that her word might be taken. And finally, Pasquali, accompanied by a jabbering guard of his own race, two able-bodied policemen, and a straggling procession of loungers, was marched off to the police court, where he was held for trial the next day, but released on bail furnished by an obliging gentleman who made a comfortable, if not entirely an

honest, living by being very much at the service of persons in sudden need of bondsmen.

The next morning Gertrude was on hand according to her promise. The courtroom was crowded with all sorts of cases. There was one young man who was explaining to the judge jocularly that it was quite impossible that his automobile should have been going at the rate at which the policeman who had arrested him on Fifth Avenue and Fourteenth Street claimed; the judge himself, he reminded his honor, who was widely known as "the Dude Magistrate," knew that because he had once or twice been with the prisoner when they tried to get some speed out of the oil boilers. But Judge Renssalaer cheerfully fined him, notwithstanding acquaintance.

"All right," shrugged the young man. He dived into his pocket and then turned to his companion who had accompanied him to court.

"Bob, can you lend me a fifty?" he asked. Robert Blake produced the required sum, remarking, after it had found its way into the treasury of justice, "I've known a long time I couldn't afford to keep a car."

"And now you know that you can't afford to travel with people who do, eh?" said the other, as they joined the spectators in the body of the courtroom. "I heard old Lady Llewellyn telling, Sunday, how she had held you up for a loan the other day."

"That wasn't what I meant, exactly," laughed Robert. "I meant I knew now that even the incidental expenses would prove too much for me, to say nothing of the original and regular—why!" he broke off in an exclamation as he saw Gertrude, greeting a fat baby held up for her caress by a stout Italian woman who had just ceased kissing her hand.

"Friends of yours?" inquired his companion, smiling.

"One, I think, is an old friend—acquaintance, rather."

Robert hesitated a moment, and the intentness of his regard called Gertrude's eyes toward him. Something

like recognition wavered across her face, and he approached her.

"You are the Miss Whitaker who so efficiently helped the victim of our car the other day," he said. "I wonder if you are also Miss Whitaker of New Hampshire—and an honorary member of the Dartmouth class of—"

"I am," she interrupted him to say, all the warmth of her eyes upon him, her large, innocent mouth smiling in shy friendliness. "I was sure it was you the other day—the freshman president of that class. But I do not know your name—it has gone from me."

"I am Robert Blake," he told her. Then he looked at her friends, who were examining him with frank interest. He smiled a little.

"Another errand of mercy, I take it?" he indicated them.

"No; I'm a witness—against the poor things, as far as I am aware. But either they haven't realized that yet, or they've forgiven it in advance." Briefly she sketched the circumstances. Robert looked speculative.

"I wonder," he said, "if I could help any. Not that he deserves it, you know. He's been caught before. It's an unpardonable offense for a man to be caught at all—but to be caught twice! That's black infamy. He deserves solitary imprisonment for life. Still, I know Renssalaer on the bench—"

"Oh, please don't!" cried Gertrude intensely. "Don't you see? If he's broken the law he must take his punishment. The sooner and the harder he learns that, the better for him. Don't you see?"

"You mean you really want to see the poor fellow fined and his excellent booze—I've heard of Pasquali's—confiscated?"

"No, I shall hate to see it, of course. But don't you understand—it's for their good to learn so that they will never forget that laws must not be broken?"

"Hurts you more than it does them—you as retributive society, I mean—but it's for their good, and you're going to see it through?"

"You make me sound rather cold-

hearted and brutal. And I don't feel so. But isn't it the only way?"

"Maybe. But, do you know, I feel a strong, obstinate inclination to try my own sort of kindness here—and I'm going to. I'm going to ask Rensselaer to be easy on him."

There was something wounded in her eyes—as though a saint beheld some faulty mortal stabbing the truth. But she said no more, and Robert, tiptoeing back toward the enclosure, sent up a hastily scrawled line to Judge Rensselaer. The judge flashed a look down that was half a grimace and meant: "What, ho! Bobby Blake in philanthropy!" But he managed to find the testimony against Pasquali conflicting and insufficient. Did not the Italians who were dining in the upper room declare that the place was a club of theirs, in which they kept a modest store of the juices of their native wine? And as for the bibulous refreshment of the young ladies who were holding a class dinner in the lower room, was there not excellent testimony to the effect that that came from the cellars of the father of one of them, an eminent physician of the city? Where, then, was the buying and selling of drinks? A former offender? But that was no reason for hounding a man out of business! Case dismissed—without Gertrude's being called to the witness chair.

It pleased the signora, in the lobby outside the courtroom, to catch the hand of Gertrude and cover it with kisses. Gertrude, she declared, and no other, had accomplished this miracle of justice for Pasquali.

And Gertrude's protests that the thing was not of her doing were drowned in a profusion of soft Italian farewells. She traveled northward through the long, dull city streets to her room in a small flat in what Lily called "darkest Harlem," somewhat worried, as was her overconscientious wont, about the ethical quality of Robert's interference, but conscious of a little unregenerate gladness that, after all, the house of Pasquali had not been visited with its just deserts.

CHAPTER IV.

Several things combined to take Robert Blake to New Hampshire in June. For one thing, his brother Gustave, the painstaking biologist, was to receive the degree of LL.D. from his alma mater, to which he was to return as professor of biology the next year, and Robert was rather fond of "old Gus." In the second place, he had always kept a rather strong feeling for his college associations, and the annual reunion was to be held in Hanover this year. And, in the third place, he wanted to get away from the immediate neighborhood of Sylvia Hardenbroeck, that he might consider just what she meant and just what he meant in the very pleasant little duet of emotion and finesse which they were playing. He did not fail to grin at his own duplicity for putting the matter thus, for he knew that Sylvia had left her aunt's at Westchester and had gone to Dublin for a fortnight with some friends, before joining her aunt, Mrs. Dartmuller, at Newport. Hanover was not so far from Dublin as New York was. However, he carefully explained to himself, in order that he might not have to chalk up against himself the charge of double dealing with his own mind, what he really meant in regard to the Hardenbroeck matter was that he wanted to get away from the hurly-burly of the city to a place where he could think things out quietly.

It was Sweeney, who had just made a handsome contribution to the football team, Sweeney who had been *persona non grata* at the college for a year before he left, and who only succeeded in obtaining his degree by what he frankly described as the skin of his teeth, who told Robert of Gertrude's presence in Hanover.

"Say, speaking of the ladies, I ran onto Dublin for a day before I came over here. Mrs. Dartmuller was moved by my vivid description of the delights of a small college commencement to say that she'd motor over with Miss Hardenbroeck, and they're here now."

"Really? I shouldn't have thought it at all in their line."

"Oh, anything for a change is their motto, I guess. The fair Sylvia is a disdainful lady, isn't she?"

"Have you found it so?" inquired Robert, longing to bang his old friend's head.

"I have—and without any reason, either. I showed up at Dublin because Mrs. Dartmuller asked me. And Sylvia gave me the cold shoulder until I fair caught rheumatism from it. Well, it was much more auntie's proposition than mine that they should be invited over here for the doings, but I've got a nephew I'm putting through here, and I got the invitations all right, and they came. And again Miss Sylvia was toploftical. I don't stand for much of that kind of thing. I know well enough what auntie would like, and I'm not saying it wouldn't suit me, too. She's a charmer, all right, Sylvia, and the woman I marry has got to have the *grand air*, and Sylvia's got it. But I've got the money—it isn't many fellows my age that ever manipulated such a deal as mine with the cattle, and she'll be getting a bit counter-worn before she knows where she's at."

"Sweeney, the constant marvel to my mind is how you managed to do it—how you managed to do anything! I always supposed that a decent degree of caution and reticence was necessary in a successful business career, and I'm hanged if you have the reserve of a chattering parrot repeating everything it has ever heard."

"I'm not much on reserve," admitted Sweeney cheerfully. "But you will kindly watch your uncle get away with his undertakings just the same!"

He strolled off, leaving Robert angry and sore.

"The bounder!" he said. "But why does she lay herself open to such talk?"

He met her at tea in Sweeney's nephew's rooms by and by. The sight of her, in a diaphanous gown that held the faded pale browns and pinks of autumn roses, gave his pulses a throb. The tired, harassed look in her lovely eyes stirred his pity. The young boys

were crowding around her—of course! The boy whom Sweeney had designated as the cub, and who turned out to be a friend of Sweeney's nephew, brought his party in to tea. Gertrude, fresh-faced, shy, uncomplicated, lost all her native charm by the side of the finished product of European and American art. She was awkward, and Sylvia's open condescension made her more so. Even a masculine eye, when brightened by Robert's fever, could detect the world-wide unlikeness between her "fussy" clothes and Sylvia's wonderful, fine simplicity of garb. Sylvia's head was crowned by a big leghorn hat, about which curled one long, soft, white feather, shading to faint pink at the tips. Gertrude's straw was laden with flowers of many hues. Couldn't she see? Couldn't she imitate things of good taste, even if she couldn't creat them, Robert impatiently wondered. And then he wondered sharply at himself for being angrily concerned about the clothes of Gertrude Whitaker, the country innkeeper's daughter. What, in the name of common sense, was her attire to him? Then he decided that it was Sweeney's caddish criticism and his own mother's unendurable patronage that had made him anxious to see Gertrude do herself justice.

Suddenly, at the door of the little room with its books and its lounges and cushions, and its big desk doing duty as a supplementary tea table, Sweeney appeared, with Robert's father in tow. A tall, spare man, with a quiet distinction of bearing, he was; his head was the peculiarly modeled one which fate had assigned to the Blakes for generations—the overhanging forehead, the high cheekbones, the long nose, the long upper lip, the deep-set eyes. His expression was that of a man whose predominant native austerity is tempered by kindness based upon experience of the world's sufferings. Sweeney, of course, brought him in with a swagger—Sweeney did everything with a swagger. But this time, even the carpenter Robert acknowledged, Sweeney had some grounds for a boastful pride; he

had been seen crossing the campus with a man whose prominence was no thing of yesterday, no mere matter of millions.

When Robert saw his father, his spirit lightened. "Ah, there's my father," he cried. "Come over, won't you, Doctor Whitaker, and meet him? And you, too, Mrs. Cobb? They've caught him there by the door, and I don't know when he'll reach us."

Gertrude looked at him gratefully. When his father had more than justified Robert's confidence, and had shown the young woman a distinguished courtesy and the old one a sympathetic attention, she looked even more grateful. The little stabs that her own self-consciousness, quite as much as the attitude of the other women had given her, were all treated with a soothing balm.

"What a wonderful man your father is?" she cried to Robert when he was taking his leave of her.

"He has his good points," agreed the son lightly. Then, more seriously: "I'm glad you and he got on together."

It was not a saying fraught with great meaning, but Gertrude went home with it ringing pleasantly in her ears and in her heart. She could not know that the instant he had delivered her and her chaperon, Mrs. Cobb, to the reluctant care of young Cobb, he had gone flying to Mrs. Dartmuller's rooms again to subject himself to the intoxication of Sylvia's beauty and wiles.

CHAPTER V.

Robert felt that life was dealing harshly and unjustly with a man of his manifest deserts when it was decreed that he must spend most of the summer in New York. His uncle, James Swan, announced his intention of going abroad for two months, and intimated a wish that Robert would devote himself pretty strictly to business during his absence. The manager of Robert's campaign also suggested that the summer would prove a good time for him to make acquaintance with a few of his constituents.

"The edges of the district ain't so sure, by a long shot, as the centre," he informed the young man, "and it wouldn't do the least harm in the world for you to do something to make yourself solid with them. You see, it's this-a-way—" And he proceeded to show Robert by a neat map, supplemented with a table of statistics, that while the main part of his district was what was popularly known as "silk-stocking'd," the crucial fight would be on the outskirts, where prosperity and ultra-respectability dwindled through a belt of competent, self-supporting labor down to a fringe of poverty and the degradation that accompanies poverty.

"The big bugs that is away now at the White Mountains and Narragansett," said the manager largely—he had been engaged for his ability as a campaign manager, and not for his refinement of vocabulary, or even his reform principles—"are goin' to vote pretty much as they generally do. There's some reform fellows there—always got a grouch against regularity in elections," he added scornfully. "They're yours without your tryin'. Then there are a lot of dyed-in-the-wool Republicans that have got money made out of protection—you couldn't get one of their votes if you got them in a dark alley with a bludgeon. It's the straight ticket for them any time and all the time—national, state, or city elections. Then I suppose you've got some friends in both the old parties who'll give you a vote?" He paused, and looked inquiringly at Robert.

"I hope so—I think so," laughed Robert.

"Well, that's the main body of the district—about evenly divided between your friends and the tariff cranks—not much Tammany there to fear. Where you've got to work, young man, is outside the main part. You've got to get the clerks that board in them good-old-houses-goin'-to-seed on the side streets. You've got to get the laborers in the tenements, and the crooks in the lodging houses."

"How am I to go about it?"



"I wonder if you are also Miss Whitaker of New Hampshire—and an honorary member of the Dartmouth class of—"

"Same old way—free ice cream, free excursions, free beer. Mothers-and-Babies up the Sound—torchlight procession advertising the Robert—what's your middle name?"

"I am shy of middle names."

"Pity. There's a better balance to 'Robert E. Blake,' for instance, than to 'Robert Blake.' Why don't you choose a middle letter? Just for this trip? It'll go better. 'The Robert J. Blake Association Strawberry Festival at Creamer's Grove, Satiddy Night—Tickets, Admitting Lady and Gent, Fifty Cents'—and then I distribute the tickets free in places where I think it'll do the most good. Only you need another letter there. What'll you choose?"

Robert felt a gay, superior tolerance for his manager, a tolerance that made humoring his whims something of a joke.

"S will do," he said. "My mother's name was Swan, so I suppose I'm not wholly a thief in borrowing it. Well, Gary, go ahead as you think best, and count on me to back you up."

"I'll get you to make a few calls with me some day," said Gary lackadaisically. He was a person who seemed to work without enthusiasm, but beneath his lethargic manner there was abundant energy, and beneath his mild, slow voice plenty of decision.

So Robert stayed in town and occupied himself with his uncle's business and his own campaign, and solaced himself and "took care of his health" by week-ends at Newport with Sylvia Hardenbroeck, and even at as remote a spot as Mt. Desert, where his parents had a cottage. Newport seemed a good deal nearer than the other place, however, and although Mrs. Dartmuller's

hospitality left something to be desired, he had friends enough in the community to supply any lack of invitation on her part.

He was just home from one of these week-ends at which Sylvia had encouraged him more openly than ever, and during which he had been saved from unmistakable and irrevocable declaration only by the cold little current of vanity which ran among the warmer impulses of his blood and always bade him beware rebuffs, when Gary decided that the time was ripe for him to visit some of his constituents. Robert was always good-natured, or had the faculty of seeming so. He hated the prospect of the hot, malodorous tenement-house visitation, of the slatternly women and bedaubed children whom he would be expected to flatter in one way or another. But it was something which apparently had to be done if he was going to stay in politics. So he set forth with Gary.

"This place came on the market the other day—that is, in April," announced Gary. "Foreclosure sale. Committee bought it in. I'm rent collector. Good business stroke, that. Lettin' up on the rent when times are bad, helpin' out when the children are sick—good business. I'll introduce you as one of the owners. You can spring it on them about the excursion to Norton's Point next week bein' your doin'!"

"Pretty business, isn't it?" said Robert, with distaste.

"Oh, you'd have to fight grubs and rot if you took to growin' roses," said Gary. "And you couldn't fight them with anything but poison and things that stunk worse'n poison, either!"

There was something in the philosophy of his manager which appealed to Robert's sense of humor.

In the tenement house which they entered in their rôles of rent collector and "one of the owners," they made their way somewhat gingerly. It was not a model tenement house, by any means, although Robert was assured by Gary that it conformed to the provisions of the law. But it was built long

before the day of the reformed tenement-house code, and it had only been clumsily patched to meet the requirements of that body of law. It was dark; it was extremely malodorous, and Robert stepped high to avoid catching his toes in the frayed oilcloth on the stairs. However, the visit was progressing successfully. Robert's handsome person, his debonair, friendly manner, even his excellent attire, made a favorable impression upon the women, who searched their teapots for the cherished hoard for rent day, or who explained at length their excellent reasons for the lack of such a hoard. And the tickets for the excursion were accepted with lively expressions of gratitude.

On the top floor, their rapping brought no response. A woman on the landing below encouraged them by saying:

"She couldn't have gone out, the creature—I've had me hall door open all the marin' for a breath of air, an' I couldn't have missed her."

They rapped again, and this time it seemed as if a faint crying answered them.

"It sounds like a child," said Gary. "If I don't get an answer this time, I'll break in."

But his loud reverberations brought no reply except the scarcely audible wail of a baby. He tried the keys on his bunch. One fitted, and the door opened before them. The woman from below stairs and some of the other denizens of the house, who had been attracted by his loud knocking, had come up the stairs and stood whispering in the narrow hall.

"Her man's been away this two weeks," said one. "The dirty coward!" said another. "Sure, he always runs away from her when there's sickness expected," volunteered a third. "He did before Katie was born. I know, for I was livin' in the same neighborhood with them then, on Twenty-seventh Street, near the gas works, it was."

To this cheerful line of prophecy, Robert and Gary strode into the inde-

scribably close and musty little hall. Out of it on one side a dark room opened. At the end, a small kitchen overlooked the narrow court. It was from that room that the whimpering came. They hurried in. On the floor, dead or unconscious, they could not at the first glance tell, lay the emaciated figure of a woman, and a child of three, dirty, almost naked, famished looking, sat near and whimpered.

"It's poison she's taken!" "No, it's starved she is, the poor thing!" "Och, the black heart of him to leave her!"

A tempest of feminine voices sounded behind the men. One woman ran in and picked up the little girl.

"I'll take her down to my place and give her some of the milk and lime water the doctor told me to get for Joe," she cried.

But the child raised her voice in a frightened scream when she was lifted.

"Mamma, mamma, mamma," she wailed, struggling to get back to the inert figure on the floor, over which Gary was working professionally.

"Here, one of you women go ring for an ambulance—what ambulance? I dunno. Well, tell a policeman to ring for one—there's a sick woman and kid here, tell him. And you, ma'am, bring up that milk and lime water for the kid. Open the window there by the fire escape, somebody, and everybody clear out! No, she ain't dead—not yet, but she will be if you don't give her a chance. And then it'll be you that have done it, not her husband at all. See?" He drove them out of the doorway, and knelt again above the woman.

"Never you travel around without one of these, Mr. Blake," he admonished Robert, holding up a flask which he produced from his inside pocket. "I never touch a drop myself, but I never go without it, and I couldn't tell you how many times it has helped out some blamed bad situation."

As he spoke, he moistened the blue lips of the woman with the fragrant brandy. After a minute he succeeded in getting a drop or two between them. By the time the neighbor from below

was back with her milk and lime water for the baby, something lifelike had returned to the face upon the floor—a face of a woman who might have been a thousand years old, so pinched and hollowed was it, but which belonged, the neighbor said, to a girl of twenty-five! Robert shuddered as he listened.

A policeman came running up the narrow stairs at the head of a crowd of women and children. He shooed these authoritatively back at the landing and came in. A question or two, a sharp look about him, and then he announced:

"Starvation—no attempt at suicide here. I'll ring the Mothers' and Babies' Hospital. They started an ambulance last year."

It was fifteen minutes before the ambulance arrived. The woman on the floor had recovered consciousness under the stimulant that had been given her. But she still lay on the floor, her black hair disordered about the ghastly whiteness of her face. She moaned and moaned, and showed no sign of recognition until the woman who had been feeding the little girl brought the child over and held it out to the mother, with a gesture indescribably tender and sympathetic. The mother's dull eyes glowed with a momentary intelligence and she opened her lips to speak, and tried to hold out her arms. They fluttered and fell again to her side. And at that moment a voice that Robert knew said: "Where is the patient? In the front? Thank you."

Robert felt a great gush of relief and thanksgiving when the girl, in her uniform of white linen and her soft, pliable straw hat, entered the room. Except for the blue band on her sleeve, embroidered with the hospital's name, she might have been any girl setting forth to play tennis or golf or to drive or sail. Her costume, in its simplicity, became her; her professional manner, assured, friendly, helpful, became her wonderfully. It seemed impossible to Robert that she had ever been shy, constrained, badly dressed. It was not for an hour or so that he reflected that each person has his own depart-

ment of knowledge, in which he is at home, at ease, in harmony with life; and to go on from that reflection to the next obvious one—that of the two departments, Gertrude's was more important to the world than Sylvia's.

But that, as has been said, was not until he had seen her take capable hold of the situation in the tenement, had seen the woman revived, the child fed, and both of them carried off for treatment at the hospital; until, feeling helpless, useless, in the way, he had followed her to the big brick building on a wide-cornered street, and had asked to see the two in the ward, and had beheld them, but had not known them without introduction, so great a change had a bath and a clean, coarse night-gown made in each of them.

When he went away he was half surprised to recall that he had been at great pains to learn Gertrude's hours off duty and to invite her to go to dinner with him. "Somewhere where you won't smell carbolic," he said.

CHAPTER VII.

It had been a pleasant dinner. In all her life Gertrude had never imagined anything so gay as the terrace outside the Park restaurant, shining softly with flowers while there was still light to see them, and then twinkling with many-colored little bulbs of light. She had never imagined such toilets as the women wore—her life in New York

had been one of hard work and self-denial, and even the free sight of opulence, which is one of the fascinations of the city to so many, had been denied her. The cabs that rolled up and deposited their laughing burdens on the terrace steps epitomized luxury to her.

"I'm afraid that not all of our friends who are dining here to-night would measure up to our New Hampshire standard of morality," said Robert lightly, looking around on the animated scene. "But I shan't apologize for bringing you here—it's a cool and sparkling place, and the air's sweet, after the hospital, isn't it? And as for our easy-going friends, they rule

the town in midsummer. Outside the Margaret Louisa Home we couldn't escape meeting some of them, no matter where we dined. And everybody comes here—there's Dolliver and Mrs. Dolliver, now, over by the corner—see; you know, the painter. And there's ex-District Attorney Brown, with his daughter and another young woman; there by the door. Tell me how you're liking it, and I'll tell you how you look."

She gave a little, excited laugh, and brought her eyes back from the tables he had just indicated. She was wearing a figured dimity dress that looked well on her, and Robert rejoiced in the good lines of her hat.

"It's lovely and very exciting," she told him. "I'm glad you brought me here; I never saw anything like it. The dining room of the Fall River boat has always been my ideal of elegance in restaurants before this." She laughed, and he laughed, too, rejoicing in the thought that the serious-minded girl possessed a sense of humor, after all, when she was not too shy to reveal it.

"And you look like a child surveying its first Christmas tree!" he told her—truthfully, as it happened. "Do you know, you have kept your young look—I mean the look you had as a kid, the night you burst in upon us—surprisingly, for a woman who has had so much experience of life as you must have crowded in."

"I haven't had so much experience of life," she corrected him. "That means loving and hating and struggling. Well, of course, I've loved people; and I've hated some people—the man who left that poor Mrs. Callahan, for instance, though I've never seen him. And I had to live closely all the time I was in school, to get through—father couldn't allow me much. But all that isn't much. And the experience you mean—the sickness, the deaths, the hospital routine—they touch me, and I live in them, of course. And yet, in a way, not more than I used to live in what I read, as a child. I don't think any death I ever saw wrung my heart

like Little Nell's. So that, somehow, I'm not an experienced person at all."

"He found that the tones of her voice soothed him. He thought they must fall deliciously upon sick ears—so round, so soft, with such a kindness in their depths! And the wholesomeness of her looks—the strong way in which she carried her back, the straight, easy poise of the head, the benignity of her brow and eyes, the healthy color of her cheeks—how all these accidental things must help to cure her patients!"

"Aren't you ever homesick for the mountains?" he asked, at length.

"I am nearly famished for them sometimes?" she cried, with gentle vehemence. "If it weren't for the help all this experience at the M. and B.—that's what we call the hospital—will be to me, I'd start home to-morrow. Sometimes I think I don't want a single thing in the world but to drive up and up, among the hemlocks and the boulders, just breathing the air. Don't you love it, up there?"

"Very much," replied Robert, quite convinced at the moment that he did.

And then the talk drifted on about their respective childhoods—hers in the hills, and his in the big, roaring city with its alternations of a seaside-city life in the summer. They confided to each other half-forgotten childish escapades. They advanced deep into intimacy that evening, and Robert left her back at the big hospital with a sense of amazement at the attraction which she developed in a free, sympathetic intercourse.

There was something in his rooms at the club where he was living, however, to change the current of his thoughts. He felt it even before he had switched on the light. He had a quick, delicious, half-suffocating sense of Sylvia. Without turning on the light, he put his hand out toward the table, and felt the envelope which contained her letter. It was of soft texture—it spelled money and ease and grace and luxury. He perceived that it was thick to the touch—not with the mere thickness of heavy paper, but with that of a long enclosure. That was sur-

prising. Sylvia was no voluminous correspondent. A sentence or two usually sufficed her, and no matter how alluring and promising her words were when they met, her written communications were something in the nature of a cold shower.

He turned up the light, and broke the seal. Sylvia, of course, used no perfume on her stationery, yet it seemed to him that a faint and subtle sweetness shook from the folded sheets. For they were sheets—and covered with her characteristic, graceful, incisive writing. The latter began abruptly, without formal address:

It is breaking my heart—I admit it—to write this, but it must be done. You've been coming too often, dear boy, and they—I refer to my honored aunts, for Aunt Mabel has reenforced herself with Aunt Grace; hence, I need scarcely say, these tears. It's Aunt Grace's decisive way that makes this letter necessary. They, as I began to say, make my life simply unbearable. They don't put me on bread and water or lock me in a dungeon, but they're after me morning, noon, and night. They assure me that our—yours and mine—pleasant and agreeable intercourse is creating talk—as though we cared for the talkers! But I've simply got to care for my aunts. They support me—and I can't bear the badgering.

Perhaps, when you are married, or when I am married, the busybody world will let us resume our friendship. It might then be assured that we had no imprudent, matrimonial intentions toward each other. It might then be taught to believe in the unemotional, uninflammable nature of our regard. But at present, my aunts assure me, it is concerned in its meddlesome old head about us. So don't—if you care enough for my comfort to wish me not to be scolded to death—come down Friday as we had planned. When we get back to town, they may all have recovered their senses—world, aunties, and all.

Do you remember "*el Gran Galeato*"? It was rumor, nothing else, that made those poor souls fall in love—do you remember? But my aunts wouldn't be warned when I recalled the instance to them!

Don't come Friday.

Your greatly vexed

S. H.

It was Thursday. Robert reached for his watch.

"Call me a taxi," he shouted through the telephone. "I want to get the midnight train to Providence. And send up a valet, will you?"

CHAPTER VI.

As the train whirled him through the hot summer night, his pulses kept time to the revolutions of the wheels, the throbbing of the engines. "I am going to her, going to her, going to her," was the refrain which they all beat out together. He had had no clear thought when he had hastily decided to go to her at once; it had been no deliberate plan, only the power of her attraction that had made him determine to answer the letter in person—to answer it with her hands in his, her eyes looking into his own, her sweet, desirable being near him—near enough to feel the force of his suddenly insistent passion. Had she known, he asked himself once, how a woman's withdrawal may rouse the hunter in a man?

But, as the hours passed, and he continued to lie sleepless in the close compartment, the first fervor passed. He found himself wondering a little why his reply to her request should be to ignore it; why he should seek to precipitate the climax she had indicated as impossible. His blood was calmer now, and no longer made the answer for him. Before he arrived at Wickford Junction, he found that he was rather annoyed with himself, and that he was saying:

"Why in thunder, when a woman tells you not to come and see her on Friday, do you break your neck to get to her on Thursday?"

He also began to remember an appointment with Gary for eleven o'clock, and another with one of his uncle's customers for one. He thought in imperative terms as he sent two telegrams from the station.

Then, resolutely, he tried to recall the mood of heat, of desire—call it love, even—which had driven him from the city the night before, as swiftly as if Sylvia's prohibition had been a bird's call to her mate. But the mood had escaped him. And, with that discovery, he fell to self-investigation. Was he, or was he not, in love with Sylvia Hardenbroeck? Was she, or was she

not, in love with him? How much of his feeling for her was mere refined sensationalism? How much of his wariness in dealing with her hitherto had been lack of love, and how much had been a cautious desire to escape rebuff?

The hour's sail across the bay banished the self-investigating spirit, banished the doubts of Sylvia's intentions, and converted the whole excursion into a mere pleasure trip. The tonic of a blue sky and blue waves, of a brisk breeze and a salt breath in the air, made itself felt at once. That impulse that the touch of Sylvia's letter paper had given him, that madness with which her prohibition, and all that it implied, had filled him, dissolved upon the sunlight along with the introspective gloom of the earlier morning. He was simply going to meet a charming playmate in a charming play-city on a heavenly summer day. Then he grinned to himself at the thought of his father or his brothers thus mercurially tossing overboard serious considerations when they had begun a journey with purposes that would prove very serious to them.

He supplemented his cramped dressing operations of the early morning on the train with more elaborate and refreshing ones. He supplemented his early morning breakfast at the junction with a more substantial meal, which he partook very deliberately. He would try to make up his mind when and how he preferred first to see Sylvia. Should he stroll to Mrs. Dartmuller's after luncheon? Should he hurry to the bathing beach now? On the whole, that might be the better plan; it might, in consideration of Mrs. Dartmuller's antagonism to him, be more tactful to meet Mrs. Dartmuller's charge upon neutral ground.

As he made his way out of the club and into the street, he greeted several acquaintances. The avenue looked to him particularly brave and delightful, with its glitter of harness, its gleam of paint, its assured, charmingly dressed girls and women, its debonair men. He walked along, rejoicing in a sense

of physical well-being, of esthetic, material satisfaction.

Suddenly down the road came a smart trap with three horses driven tandem. They were beautifully matched chestnuts, and every one favored them with a second glance. Robert looked, with the rest of the avenue, and, glancing past the shining beasts to the box seat of the cart, he beheld Sylvia, exquisite in coarse, shining white linen. On her face was the look he had come to know—the exultation in power. She handled the reins admirably, and drove her horses through the noonday press of vehicles with conscious skill. A little smile of pleasure and pride curved her lips, and there was a dash of darker red than usual on her exquisite pale cheeks. All this Robert saw in one glance. And it needed no second glance to show him that it was Sweeney who lolled in the seat beside her, and eyed her with the possessive admiration with which he might have eyed the spirited horses, had they belonged to him.

Sylvia caught Robert's glance before the horses had dashed by. He had a second's impression of a confusion on her face, of a nod that was almost automatic, of a deepening of her color. And then they had gone by, and Sweeney, apparently apprised by Sylvia of his presence, turned in the cart to wave a friendly hand toward him.

He stood quite still for a second, staring after the conspicuous turnout. On

his face was set a smile that was half a sneer—it was the look with which he had met Sylvia's salutation. Some one spoke to him, and awoke him from a little trance of anger and wounded vanity.

"Hello, old chap," said his acquaintance. "Just come down?"

"No," replied Robert concisely. "I'm just going back. Excuse me, old fellow, but I have just time to make the one-five boat."

"So-long," returned the other lightly. "Miss Hardenbroeck is a peachy driver, isn't she?"

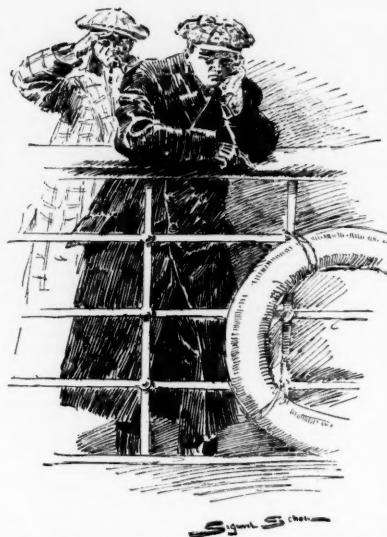
"Dandy," was Robert's reply.

And all the way back to the city, engines throbbed and wheels revolved to a new tune—"Sweeney, Sweeney, she threw me down for Sweeney! Sweeney, Sweeney, she threw me down for Sweeney!" Once or twice he startled two pleasant young teachers who had the chairs behind him, and who were engaged in thrilling reminiscences of their encounters with in-

subordination, by a short, sharp laugh.
"For Sweeney!"

CHAPTER VII.

Gertrude was doing her work in the hospital in a sort of daydream. The sick women and children found her even more lovely than before; her eyes were even fuller of kindness and love and pity, her hands—those fine, firm hands—seemed to fall even more softly upon hot foreheads and limp wrists,



And all the way back to the city, engines throbbed and wheels revolved to a new tune—"Sweeney, Sweeney, she threw me down for Sweeney!"

seemed to touch with even less rudeness than before the wounds and scars at which she had to look. All her directions were given with her accustomed precision, and she was as tireless as ever. Nevertheless, it was a daydream in which she dwelt.

She did not realize it, herself. Had she been suddenly called upon to give an exact statement of her thoughts by a power impossible to deny or to deceive, she would have replied in all honesty that she was thinking of what was to do for Mrs. Callahan when that poor creature was able to leave the hospital; or of the desirability of substituting beef juice for milk in the case of the weak and emaciated little Italian boy who had been brought in from the rear cellar on Mulberry Street the other night. Not once in an hour—scarcely once in the day—could even omniscience have accused her of thinking of Robert Blake. And yet she was living in the thought of him. The sense of kindness, of charm, with which he had surrounded her that evening when he had taken her to the Park to dinner, the impression of buoyant, lovable, dominant strength and gayety which he always had given her, from the hour when she had first seen him, made the atmosphere in which each separate thought and act of her life had being.

She found a little note from him one morning a few days after their dinner together. It ran:

Can you not find time to practice a little of your healing art upon the victim of a nasty hurt? It is selfish of me to want to thrust myself upon you, but I do; and if you do not want to be bored with a melancholy, grouchy, injured sort of fellow, tell me that nothing will induce you to go for dinner with me your next free evening, and steadfastly refuse to let me know when it is.

She took it all as a joke, and she smiled a little as she wrote an acceptance and told him when she would again be free.

He came for her in an electric handsom, and she saw no mark of tragedy upon him. Indeed, he seemed rather gayer than usual, and he made no reference to his hurts.

"I like to show you the world that

amuses itself," he told her, when they were coming back from a spin out the boulevard above the Hudson. "I think it is a good thing for you to see that all the world is not as unhappy as our friend—what's her name?—the lady who starved herself to bring us together. Mrs. Callahan? Well, to see that with a fair part of the world's population, suffering is not the rule; that there's a lot of sunshine about, and that gayety's very pretty to look at. Shall we appease our ravenous hunger at the Claremont? You don't know where it is! My dear Doctor Whitaker, then you don't know one of the most beautiful spots in the city—I'm inclined to think in any city!—to say nothing of a place replete in historical association. I speak like a guidebook, but I cannot go on to tell you the exact number of heroes who have been tendered congratulatory banquets here."

And now it began to seem to her that his constant talk did cloak some mental restlessness. But all her native shyness was in arms at the thought of trying to find out what it was, or of reminding him of what his note had said. So they ate, and he chattered and she was rather silent, until the moon came out over the river and the night was beautifully fair with the lights of many craft below them on the silvery flood.

"Miss Whitaker, you won't think I'm flippant and impertinent if I make the time-honored inquiry—have you ever been in love?" said Robert finally.

She started a little.

"But of course you have! When you were ten, doubtless, you first felt the sentiment at sight of your neighbor boy's skill with the plow. Your heart has beaten swiftly to the observation of some youth's prowess upon the glittering ice, and to another's mighty skill in tossing hay! And since you have been in New York with those fascinators, the Bob Sawyers, and—but what's the good of my going on about you, when you clearly perceive it's about myself that I want to talk? You see before you, my dear young lady, a victim of love misprised—or of wounded vanity.

I wonder if you could tell me which? How are you on ministering to the mind diseased—which the mind-half-in-love assuredly is?"

There was a weight upon her heart, an incomprehensible constriction in her throat. She did not answer for a second, and he, who had been looking idly off down the river, turned his gaze upon her. The shaded electric candle at the table only faintly illumined her features, but even in its slight, rosy radiance, he thought that the girl looked pale. He began to speak again, but she forestalled him.

"You couldn't have chosen a more ignorant confidant," she said, "but if you really want to talk, go ahead. I'll lend you my ears."

"And you think that is all that an egotist like me needs to make him happy? Perhaps you're right. But I think the story of my disappointment will wait. I was a selfish brute—I ought to have remembered that you are constantly in the presence of real tragedies, and that you don't need any little tuppenny make-believe ones on your evenings out."

"Is it—is it—" she asked, trying to steady her voice, and ignoring his speech, "Miss Hardenbroeck? Ah, forgive me! I had no right to ask you. But you seemed such friends—that day last spring, and then at the college. And she is so beautiful." Her sentence ended on a little note of wistfulness.

"Women are wonderful!" observed Robert. "You think you are going to tell them something—and, by Jove, they've known it all along. And I dare say you could tell me now," he went on, "exactly what happened to cast down my pride or my hopes or whatever it was I had? Perhaps you could even tell me what my feelings were?"

"We have a palmist and crystal gazer in one of the wards now—she has found it a poor season for divination and is broken down for lack of proper food—but she hasn't revealed the secrets of her profession to me." Gertrude tried to rally to meet his light manner on an equal footing.

"She doesn't have to—you've got

them already. You could set up as her rival in business. But, seriously, Miss—Doctor—do you know, I don't like calling you 'Doctor Whitaker,' and I'm afraid 'Miss Whitaker' may not be professional. I wish—I've known you a dozen years, you're a classmate of mine. What's the harm in your first name?"

"It's a perfectly good first name," said Gertrude, laughing. "It has never been overused, and has not become shopworn. But Miss Whitaker is quite correct, if you prefer it to 'doctor'."

"If I can't call you 'Gertrude,'" he said, with sudden obstinacy, "I can't reveal the sad story of my life to you."

"Then I am afraid," she answered, "that you cannot tell it. I don't want to seem stiff or unsympathetic," she added, with swift compunction, "but if you really wanted to tell me anything, you wouldn't care what you called me. And—somehow, I feel that we shall not see so very much of each other hereafter—you are so busy in such a different way from the one in which I am so busy. And it isn't really worth while—I mean it is better that we should not—play at being intimate friends."

It was out of a sudden vastness of desolation that she spoke—a loneliness and grayness that had crept in upon her with his first words about his love affair, until now all that strong sense of gladness and kindness she had been feeling was obliterated, as a fog obliterates a sunny landscape upon the shore.

"I have been presumptuous," acknowledged Robert readily. "And you are quite right to rebuke me. But—I didn't mean to be merely 'flip.' I am not going to talk about myself—I doubt if there's anything to tell. But I have been feeling a little—jarred—the last day or two, and you won't think it part of my general impertinence if I say that the thought of you was like the thought of dew and twilight upon aching eyes, will you?"

Battling with her own hurt, by which she first knew what her emotions had been, she could do nothing but nod

and murmur: "It's all right—I'm sorry. Please take me back, will you? It is getting late."

He took her home without further talk except the desultory sentence or two which leave-taking demanded. And he went away, saying to himself: "Now, what was the matter with her? And was I, too—fresh, as we used to call it?" And she went blindly through the white-tiled halls, steeped in the stinging, sickening scent of antiseptics, saying to herself:

"Oh, you poor little fool! You poor little fool! And to think you couldn't even command yourself so that you might have helped him a little, if he was really unhappy."

CHAPTER VIII.

"I came," said Sylvia, "to be fitted for my bridesmaid's frock for Anita Healy's wedding. You realize that, don't you?"

"By putting my whole mind on it, I am able to grasp it."

"But since I was in town, I thought I should like to see you, to explain something to you."

"You do me too much honor," said Robert lightly. He had himself well in hand. He had made no accusation, he had displayed no pique. When Sylvia had telephoned him from the Colony Club, he had replied in the pleasantest possible manner. He had been proud of his self-command. He had told himself that the indifference he was able to enact so well was an indifference he almost felt, and therefore it was quite clear to his own mind that he was not in the least in love with Sylvia Hardenbroeck. But that cool opinion had been formed in his office, with a mahogany desk for companion. Now he was sitting opposite her across a little table, in a frivolous, pretty, make-believe-garden room, and it was different. The subtle spell which she exerted began to influence him again.

"If you think," she said, with a bluntness very unlike her usual speech, which was full of graceful suggestion rather than of fact, "that I had asked

you not to come last week because I knew that Mr. Sweeney was coming, you are——"

"My dear girl! Have I even hinted a suspicion so—so unlikely?"

"You left at once."

"Business—detestable bore." He faintly exaggerated his indifference.

"Well, whatever you thought, I didn't have a notion that Mr. Sweeney was coming. Aunt Mabel had invited him, but had cautiously forbore to mention the fact."

"It is very kind of you to tell me," said Robert formally. "I might, of course, have felt my nose slightly disjointed."

They were silent for a few minutes, and then she looked at him with a look he had never before seen in her eyes—a look? With tears in her eyes!

"Bobby," she said softly, "if anything happens to break up our friendship, I shall take it very hard!"

The sight of that lovely face saddened for him, of those eyes that held the lights of amber and beryl in their depths dissolved in tears for him, went to Robert's head like wine. All her old fascination was multiplied a thousand-fold.

"Sylvia! Darling!" he cried. "My dear one, don't, don't look unhappy for me! Nothing shall ever come between us. But we will not call it friendship any longer. We will call it by its right name, Sylvia—love, love, love!"

But though she answered him according to his passionate wish of the second, and though the next hour passed satisfactorily and deliciously, considering the limitations of even the best-regulated feminine club, he had not left her half an hour before the old mood of question had come upon him. Was she sincere? Was he? Was this the whole of love? He tried to shake the problem from him. What more did he want? He had won the most charming of women, and in addition to that he had won the one woman who made his heart beat fast by her mere presence, his pulses throb; he had won the woman whom Sweeney, with all the millions of that first porcine

coup and all the millions of that second stroke in wheat, could not win!

The thought of Sweeney's millions, however they might minister to his sense of superiority, cooled him a little. His income was all very well for a bachelor with a well-established father behind him, and a host of hospitable friends. It would not look so adequate when he and Sylvia should come to consider it—but she had known its scantness when she accepted him. He had never posed as a rich man. It would behoove him to make a coup or two himself, now! Perhaps he had better get out of politics—they absorbed time and money—and devote himself exclusively to business. But she had said she liked the idea of his being in politics. That slight adornment of distinction he had been able to offer her, and she had liked it! "It carries on your family tradition well," she had said. "Some day you'll be a senator—a statesman senator, not a railroad senator. And your portrait shall hang beside your great-grandfather's, the judge's. Only you're so much better looking, Bobby dearest, that it will seem unfilial."

"Never mind about the portraits, Sylvia," he had answered. "They will go to Nat, anyway."

"What a nuisance! I wish you didn't have any brothers, Bobby, but were the whole of the Blakes, all by yourself!"

"They're better fellows than I am—you'll like them all," he had replied tritely.

"Shall I? Maybe! Well, I have one or two ancestral portraits of my own. It's about all I do possess! Fancy how they would have looked askance upon the—Sweeney ménage!" He frowned. "Now don't be cross and jealous! They aren't going to have the chance, are they? They never could have had the chance. It's a mystery to me how Aunt Mabel, who is certainly a well-born woman herself, could have calmly contemplated that mésalliance for me. Contemplated it? Urged it!"

"Don't let's think of it, dearest," he had answered. But he was thinking about it now, as he walked toward his

club. Money, distinctions—these things counted so much even in love. Well, and why not? Was he surprised to learn that he and Sylvia did not dwell in Acadia?

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Blake, whom Robert found alone when he went dutifully down to Maine to apprise his family of his matrimonial intentions, expressed her keen delight.

"Of course, I saw how it was with you both all last winter," she announced importantly.

"Did you?" asked her son dryly. "You saw more than existed, I am inclined to think."

"No, this proves that I am right. I am delighted, Robert, delighted! She is exactly the wife for you—she can advance your interests in a thousand ways."

"That, of course, is why I asked her to marry me," replied Robert, with serious voice, and half angry, half amused, eyes.

"Don't be ridiculous. Of course, I know you're both madly in love, and all that. But is it not a thing to rejoice a mother's heart that her son not only marries where his inclination leads him, but where advantage would lead also? Sylvia has tact, charm, the very best social connections. Your political aspirations will be sure of success with her by your side. Your position is assured."

"I hadn't supposed the position of your son and my father's insecure. Besides, there was never much danger of my marrying the cook."

"Not the cook, no. But I have never known where your inclination might lead you, Robert. You have more vagaries in your blood—you have been more difficult to understand than the other boys. And you have been running around the city this summer with some one, haven't you?"

"First I knew of it. I took my honored uncle and a steamer acquaintance of his—I think she's a milliner from Topeka——"

"Robert!"

"Fact, I assure you. I took them to dinner one night, but I don't think you need worry. She went on West the next day."

"If John Swan, at his age, should go do anything absurd and disgraceful! After being a bachelor for so many years! But I don't believe he will. What I have always hoped is that he would leave you a good deal, Robert—enough to keep you from worrying. You know your father will not have a great deal to divide."

"The subject is distasteful, mother," replied Robert, frowning. "Let us drop it. When do you expect father back from the convention?"

"Wednesday or Thursday. But I am still thinking of the girl you were running around with in New York. Greta Hardwick saw you twice at dinner with the same one. She said that she was sure the lady was not a stage favorite, but beyond that she couldn't reassure me."

"Oh! I know whom she meant. But I do not admire Mrs. Hardwick's wit or penetration. I took Doctor Whitaker to dinner twice. She's a very fine, genuine character—a noble woman, and a very sweet one."

"Does Sylvia know your opinion of her?"

"I am quite willing that she should hear it at any time. It does me no injustice, or Doctor Whitaker, either."

Robert and his mother always rubbed each other the wrong way, and he was conscious of a great irritation now. He wished that his father was at home.

"Well, thank Heaven, you aren't engaged to her!"

"She wouldn't bother with the likes of me," said Robert more lightly. "Well, mother, having broken the glad tidings to you, I think I'll go over to the Wrens' for a while. I'll write father. And will you do whatever is proper by Sylvia? Of course, it's an unnecessary question! But do remember, won't you, that she insists it is not to come out until the autumn?"

"I wonder why? I don't like it."

"Oh, she'll be more comfortable while she's visiting Mrs. Dartmuller.

That lady was keen to have her marry money—which your son does not represent. Mrs. Llewellyn will be more philosophical about it, though she will consider Sylvia a good deal of a fool. But, remember—not until October is the public to know."

"Very well. But—Robert—" Her manner was nervous, her breath came a little short. "Let me tell your father."

"Why—I rather thought—Won't he expect to hear from me myself about such a thing?"

"He's—I have reasons. Let me tell him."

"You don't mean that he won't approve? That he doesn't like Sylvia?"

"Oh, no, I mean nothing of that sort, though I'm sure I don't know whether he approves of her or not. I suppose he does, or will, as soon as the family view includes her. He always likes all girls when he is aware of their existence, just as he always likes all flowers when he happens to see them. But I want to tell him this myself."

"Well, of course, if you wish it so much."

When he had left the room, his mother's clasped fingers unlaced themselves.

"It must be announced before Nathaniel hears it!" she said. "Else there is no telling what folly he will insist upon. Oh, just Heaven, I must have this one thing out of all my life—out of all my life!"

CHAPTER X.

That there is a vast difference between a flirtation and an engagement was a fact increasingly patent to Robert. He and Sylvia had been painfully obliged to come to earth so often. All sorts of annoyances, all sorts of sordid questions were continually arising between them. And she still persisted in keeping the engagement unannounced. It was not flattering to his vanity, the whole situation. Yet there were compensating moments, when Sylvia, abandoning her computations in regard to servants, house rent, and wardrobes, showed him a sweetness, half gay, half



"Bobby," she said softly, "if anything happens to break up our friendship, I shall take it very hard!"

wistful, altogether captivating, which he had not known in the days of their earlier, lighter acquaintance.

He had little doubt that she loved him. The only query which her conduct sometimes awoke in him was whether she did not love better the easy way of life to which she was accustomed. And sometimes in the hours of his dissatisfaction, he asked himself if he really loved her; if she was necessary

to him with any great, fundamental need; if his feeling for her was not a light tenderness, a slight passion. But, after all, how did he know that this "love," of which the world prated, was anything more than what he felt? He could not enter the hearts and souls of men and women to learn if there was a deeper, more compelling power in them than this which was marrying him to Sylvia Hardenbroek.

He was, as usual, thinking of these things one evening in late September as he rolled down the Avenue in a hansom toward a dinner of the Campfire Club to a recently arrived Thibetan explorer. The Campfire Club was one of Robert's vanities. His membership in it he regarded as the tacit acknowledgment on the part of the world that he was something more—and in his opinion, better—than a budding broker, a dilettante politician, and his respectable father's son. He had won his membership, shortly after he had come out of college, by a winter's exploits in the Canadian Rockies. He still rejoiced in the recollections of that winter—its hardships, its triumphs, its keen, abounding sense of physical life. And he missed just as few of the Campfire festivities as possible. To-night, he realized, the attendance at the feast to the passing stranger would be slim—it was between seasons. And for that reason, he was the more determined to attend. He had had a slight quarrel with Sylvia about it—she had wanted him to join her aunt and her in a motor trip to Rhinebeck for a bridge tournament. He half laughed in contempt of the notion.

His hansom, bowling down the street, was detained a minute at the Thirty-fourth Street crossing, and he looked idly at the crowd waiting on the opposite sidewalk. On the curb he saw Gertrude Whitaker. She was alone, and her face had fallen into lines of seriousness—almost of sadness. She seemed tired, he thought, with a pang of conscience that he had so neglected her since the sudden dénouement of his friendship with Sylvia. There was almost a droop in her straight shoulders beneath their plain blue serge, and the face above her white stock was drawn and weary. The strong-minded woman of his mother's antipathy looked as much in need of care as the weakest of her sex, and Robert felt a chivalrous impulse to give it to her.

At the moment when the downtown traffic was released, and his cab started forward, Gertrude felt his gaze, and looked up to meet his eyes, and her own

filled with a wonderful, swift light. Even in the second of salutation between them, he saw the new look, saw the wave of rose that dyed her pale face, and marveled at it. And the rest of his drive was given up to thoughts of Gertrude and not of Sylvia. He felt anew what he had told her when last they had met—that the thought of her was infinitely restful to tired, harassed man, like dew and twilight upon tired eyes. Ah, well! He put down a curious ache that throbbed in him at the thought, a man could not have everything in one woman—fire and a spray-like brilliancy, with calm, sweet, silent peace and rest as well.

Mr. Bernard Fletcher, the Thibetan explorer whom the club was honoring, stood in an anteroom with the president of the club beside him, meeting the guests. He was a tall, straight, lean man of perhaps sixty-five, an imposing and interesting figure, at first glance. His skin was tanned to a rich brown which set off his gray hair effectively. His eyes beneath his gray eyebrows were as brilliant as blue ice. Their brilliancy was not that of warmth, however, and the lines about them were lines of cynicism. In spite of his superb physical condition, his look of complete power and suppleness, there was something sinister, selfish, almost hawklike, in the handsome face. Robert was conscious of a swift repulsion from him, as he advanced.

The introduction over, he lingered for a moment listening to the talk between the two men.

"You must see great changes in thirty-odd years, Mr. Fletcher," remarked some one, taking up the talk where it had been interrupted. Mr. Fletcher acknowledged that there were changes.

"You are not an American?" said another.

Fletcher laughed, and Robert, irresistibly held near him, thought he had never heard a more musical laugh. And the voice was deeply, winningly musical in which he replied:

"I shouldn't have been able to stay away thirty years if I had been. No,

I'm what my name implies—an Irishman."

"You'll be perfectly at home in New York," some one told him, and again he laughed, and again Robert felt a pull at his heartstrings at the sound.

At dinner he sat on the opposite side of the main table from Fletcher, a little lower down the line. Celebrities were not so many in town at the moment that he was shunted to an inferior table; besides, he was something of a celebrity himself. Was he not the young man who was going out to purify politics? Two or three men asked him about his campaign, and he replied lightly. He could not remove his eyes or his attention from the guest. As the evening wore away, his first feeling of repulsion wore off with it, and he found himself half fascinated by the man, by his good looks, his voice, his gift of speech—Fletcher told stories of the strange places of the earth with undeniable skill and ease—by the charm which the man radiated. And by and by a sense of familiarity with his features began to steal upon him. He lost the point of one or two anecdotes while he pursued the evanescent sense of resemblance through his mind. Of course, he could never have seen the man who had not been in the country for thirty-odd years; unless, indeed, he had caught a glimpse of him somewhere abroad.

The notion took complete possession of him by and by, and he found himself leaning across the table to ask Fletcher if he had been in London at such and such times, or in Paris or Rome at such and such other periods. Fletcher shook his head.

"I have an alibi for every date, it seems," he said finally when he had said that he was in India at one time, in Ireland at another, and in South Africa at a third. "I do sometimes revisit the scenes of civilization, but I was not in any of the places you mention in the years you mention."

"I am simply obsessed by the notion that your face is familiar to me," replied Robert, "and as my powers of observation and remembrance were

small thirty years ago, I thought that perhaps I had seen you abroad. It is probably your picture that I have seen."

"That I do deny," exclaimed Fletcher vehemently. "If there is one human being that I loathe beyond others, it is the man who hunts or explores, and then obligingly poses for his picture besides his quarry. No—I've never let the illustrated picture papers get hold of me; one snap shotter had his camera smashed. We'll have to ascribe your recollection of my phiz to one of our earlier appearances on the planet—or some other planet." He smiled kindly on the younger man.

"What's the name of the good-looking chap who has been talking to me?" he asked the president of the club, in a low tone, a few minutes later.

"Blake—Robert Blake. Son of Nathaniel the second; a distinguished family, locally."

"Blake—ah!" Fletcher repeated the name musingly. His keen eyes were bent upon the young man for a second, and again he murmured: "Blake!"

After dinner, he sought Robert out.

"Mr. Blake," he said, "I wish you would come and lunch with me to-morrow. I am on my way West—or East, via the West. I'm bound for the Philippines, and I am going to start for San Francisco to-morrow night. But if you have no engagement and could come on such short notice—" His rising inflection finished the sentence.

"I shall be very delighted," replied Robert, astonished and, of course, gratified. He met the explorer's eyes on a level; the two men were of a height. Some one, observing them as they stood face to face, remarked: "Handsome pair, and very much the same type, aren't they?"

"Very well. At one, at the Waldorf, then? I always stay in the most ornate hostelry in a town when I happen to be in one—it's so seldom, and the sense of contrast is delightful."

They nodded their good nights, and Robert went out with one of the club officers.

"We were in luck to get Fletcher," remarked he. "He arrived only this

morning, and he leaves for Chicago at noon to-morrow."

"No, at night," Robert corrected him.

"My dear fellow," replied the other importantly, "I happened to be with him when he bought his section on the one o'clock to-morrow."

"In that case," said Robert, "it will behoove me to telephone to-morrow morning to see if he really meant to invite me to lunch with him. Good night, old chap," and he swung into the uptown street.

He was still living at the club, his father's house being closed. His father had made a hasty trip to London to attend a scientific convention there, and was still—such had been his mother's incomprehensible wish—unaware of his engagement to Sylvia. At the desk, however, he found a telephone message from his mother, announcing that it had grown too cold to be endured in Maine, and that she had come unexpectedly to town, and was at the Holland House for the night. If he came in in time, would he please call her up?

He looked at the clock. It was after midnight—too late to telephone a mother, too late to telephone even a sweetheart. He had had a moment's impulse to call Sylvia up at Rhinebeck and "make up" after their little spat of the morning. But it was too late; and even if it weren't, Sylvia would be playing bridge and would hate him for interrupting her. Sylvia had told him the other day that she meant to play a winning game of bridge henceforth. "I know women who dress on what they make," she had said. "Well, you shall not be one of them," he had replied, with some heat, "not if you wear homespun, missy!" Still, Sylvia would not relish interruption at her game.

As he moved about his room, slipping out of his dinner clothes, he caught a sudden reflection of himself from one mirror to another. He straightened suddenly, and stared. The profile that the looking-glass upon his shaving stand had thrown into the looking-glass above his chiffonier was the profile of Fletcher.

With a smothered exclamation, he

turned all the lights in the room on, and surveyed himself narrowly. The same high, broad forehead, the same well-chiseled nose, the same cleft chin! The same thick hair with ineradicable curl in its ends, only his was bright with young gold whereas Fletcher's was bright with age's silver. Eyes as blue as Fletcher's were noting these resemblances; they were kinder, honester eyes than the explorer's, but that Robert did not see yet. He only saw, with amazement, that the familiarity he had felt with Fletcher's appearance had been learned for thirty-one years before his own mirror.

"It is the most remarkable likeness I ever saw," he told himself finally. "It's a curious freak. Atavism, I suppose. Some Blake or some Swan married a Fletcher once a few centuries ago, and here am I facing an alien gentleman with his own mug! I wonder if he noticed it. Perhaps that's why he asked me to luncheon. Ought I to feel embarrassed, as if he had caught me with the family silver?"

He went to bed when he had thoroughly satisfied himself of the extraordinary resemblance, but he slept brokenly and badly. Fletcher walked through his dreams, but sometimes it was with a Mephistophelian head set upon his stalwart shoulders. And Robert's mother wailed continually that she and she alone would tell his father of his engagement to Sylvia. And by and by he dreamed that he was weeping on Gertrude Blake's breast over some long-forgotten childish sorrow, and that her beautiful, strong, tender, white hands were stroking his hair very gently.

"That is the last time I mix drinks," said Robert solemnly to himself, when he awoke unrefreshed the next morning. "Though I'm sure I didn't think I was imbibing enough to bring on a nightmare."

CHAPTER XI.

On his way downtown he stopped in dutifully at his mother's hotel. He found her peevish, agitated.

"Why doesn't Sylvia announce your engagement?" she demanded. "It is in

extremely poor taste, if you want my opinion. A reporter from *Town and Country* was here last night, asking me about it. I simply could not deny it."

"You don't mean to say that you dared—to aspounce it, against Sylvia's wishes?" Robert was white with anger.

"No, of course not. I told the girl I simply could not say anything. I told her that if there was any announcement to be made, Miss Hardenbroeck's relatives would of course be the ones to see—"

"Good heavens, mother, how could you do such a thing? It will probably be in the evening papers!"

"Well, it's high time it was in the evening papers. You are to be married before Christmas—you told me so! And you haven't even announced your engagement! It's a very slipshod way of doing things, if you want my opinion."

"When will father be back?" asked Robert, changing the subject.

"To-morrow or the next day—the Ball is due to-morrow."

"I should hate to have him learn of his son's engagement through a paragraph in the morning paper. Why on earth you let him get off without telling him, mother, passes my comprehension."

"It slipped my mind at the time," said Mrs. Blake.

"It hasn't seemed to slip your mind often since." Robert spoke with some annoyance. "However, there's no good grumbling. Mother"—he had been standing in front of her mirror and his mind reverted to the resemblance of last night—"did any Blake, to your knowledge, ever marry a Fletcher? Or any Swan—why, mother!"

She had started from her chair with wild eyes, her hand clutching at her heart. She sank back now and tried to summon a natural expression to her face.

"I—a cramp around my heart," she panted. "I—haven't said much about them—I have them often. What—what was it you asked?"

But Robert, alarmed, did not repeat his question. Instead, he demanded to

know, with the anger which serious symptoms of sickness in those near to us always arouse, why she had not told his father of her condition; why she had not told the family physician; why she had not consulted specialists. By the time he was through scolding and questioning, her face had resumed its normal color, and she was able to laugh at him.

"What was it you were asking me?" she insisted upon hearing.

Robert repeated his question, adding: "I met the explorer, Fletcher—Bernard Fletcher—last night, and I look enough like him to be his son. I didn't care much for his looks at first; but, of course, I see now that he is a strikingly handsome man."

"Bernard Fletcher—the explorer," she repeated in a low voice. "I've read of him. So he is in this country. No, I don't know of any intermarrying between the Blakes and Fletchers. When is he going away?"

Robert stared at her, perplexed. She had spoken almost lifelessly. She was not looking at him now, but at her lightly clasped hands, lying in the lap of her peignoir.

"He leaves to-night, I believe," replied Robert, staring. "He has asked me to lunch with him to-day."

"You?"

"Mother!" cried the young man suddenly and fiercely. "What is the matter? What do you care whether or not this man is in the country? Whether or not I lunch with him? When he leaves? Mother!" His voice implored her for some reassurance against the vast, horrible fear that was knocking at the foundations of his universe. But at the sound of panic, of terror, and threat in his voice, she regained her self-possession, and raised blank, inexpressive eyes toward him.

"What is the matter with you, Robert?" she asked coldly.

He could not put the monstrous idea into words. He looked at her hard and long, but her cold gaze did not flinch beneath his look. So that finally he took up his hat with a sigh of relief.

"I—nothing. I'm a bit off this morn-

ing. Going to open up the house today?" he added carelessly.

"Yes. So that you can be at home, dear boy, the little while that you will be with your old mother and father," she told him. "Have you and Sylvia house-hunted yet?"

"Flat-hunted," he replied, with a grimace. "Well, I'll report at the old camp as soon as you tell me to."

"That will be to-night."

He stooped and kissed her cheek lightly, in a compunction of shame for the horror that had enveloped him a few minutes before. Then he left her. But as he made his way to the elevator, her door opened behind him and she called:

"Where did you say you were lunching, Bob—with the explorer?"

"At the Waldorf." The ghastly suspicion was with him again. He half turned to go back to her, but her door swung shut, and he moved off down the corridor to the cage of the elevator.

When he reached the Waldorf at one o'clock, he was dizzy with the strain of his morning's battle with the fancy that he called his waking nightmare. He gave his name to the clerk at the desk.

"You are the gentleman who has been telephoning, sir?"

"No."

"Excuse me—the same name; Mr. Blake, at the Holland House—or—Had you an appointment? Yes? Well, Mr. Fletcher left word that he might be ten minutes late; he was called downtown. But he asked you please to wait."

"And Mr. Blake has been telephoning from the Holland House?" Robert commanded his voice to inquire.

"Two messages were received asking Mr. Fletcher to call up Mr. Blake at the Holland House when he came in—if he came before one. Another Mr. Blake, I suppose, sir."

"I suppose so," Robert spoke heavily. Why was his mother so anxious to get into communication with this—adventurer? He found himself calling his prospective host names.

Fletcher advanced at the very moment he turned from the desk—hand-

some, erect, bright-eyed, apologetic. Robert greeted him with a heavy constraint. When they were seated at luncheon, he replied at random to the older man's remarks, and tried furtively to take account again of all the strong resemblances between them. There was something eager, kindly, half pitiful about the older man this morning. The coldness of his face was warmed by some human tenderness, the piercing brightness of his eyes was modified by something half wistful. Robert felt the change in him, and it filled him with a mingled dread and softness. Suddenly, when they were stumbling through the luncheon awkwardly, he took a rash resolve. He would end the torturing doubts that were eating into his soul.

"Have you noticed how much I look like you?" he asked abruptly. His hands shook as he raised a glass to his lips after the question. Fletcher nodded, with a half-proud light in his eyes.

"I asked my mother this morning," continued Robert through chattering teeth, "if she knew of any intermarrying between the Blakes and Fletchers which would account for it. She—she did not know of any."

"There are many freaks of that kind," replied Fletcher, and proceeded to relate instances of his own observing in which men not only of different families, but different branches of the Aryan race, resembled each other like blood brothers. Robert listened dully.

"I do not look at all like either the Blakes or the Swans," he said, and before the other man realized what he was answering, he had said: "No, I don't think you do."

"Ah!" Robert leaped upon the words. "You have seen my people."

Pallor beneath the heavy tan of Fletcher's skin was merely like a sprinkling of ashes. He stared fixedly at Robert and nodded.

"When? And which of them?"

"When I was in this country, thirty-two years ago. Your father, your mother, and a brother of hers." He made reply like a man upon the witness stand.

"This morning," said Robert measuredly, "my mother did not acknowledge any acquaintance with you. Yet you knew her. Thirty-two years ago. And my father. Where?"

"It was in the Adirondacks. Your mother was there for her health. Your father came two or three times to visit her. I—I was laid up there with a broken arm that knit very slowly. It was——"

"Go on," said Robert woodenly.

"My boy, I do not need to," replied the older man.

They sat there in silence for a while. The boy kept his wretched, wounded eyes upon the table. The old man watched him pitifully. By and by he broke the silence.

"Listen," he said. "I do not want you to think more meanly of me than you must—or of—her. You know—Blake. A wonderful man, but inhumanly remote from life. Absorbed in science. They—your mother and he—had grown leagues apart. Not that he knew it. He was satisfied with his life of abstractions. He did not realize how full of life and ambition and—dissatisfactions in general, she was. They dwelt in two worlds. They had, for a long time. They had had no child for ten years, yet she was a young woman. He—he was—content in his world of study, and she was boundlessly discontented in hers. And I—well, let us simply say that I was a common blackguard. I had never practiced much self-restraint in my life. I had no conventional standards of morality. And—your moth—" Robert made a faint gesture of repudiation. "She was very charming. For what happened I make no pretenses of repentance," he added, with sudden anger. "What happened then, I mean. I went away. I was to have come back. She was to have got or to have received a divorce, and I—we were to have married. All was to have been done within a few months. I went—and you must try to believe what I tell you, for it is the truth. I—got drunk. I was shanghaied aboard an Australian-bound vessel. I was shipwrecked on a desert island. When I

reached a port from which I could send a word to civilization, it was fourteen months after I had left her, promising to return in three! I found out, in a roundabout way, that she and he were living together, and that there had been another child born to them—after an interval of ten years. I wrote to her once. I never came again to this country until yesterday morning. I shall never come back again. Will you tell her so?"

The young man pushed some cutlery aside on the table, and leaned his forehead heavily upon his palm, his elbow on the cloth. No words could force their way through the impenetrable confusion in which his thoughts were lost. By and by, he raised his head and spoke.

"It's—it's knocked me a bit silly. But—I'll tell her what you say. It—it—rather revises my scheme of living. We Blakes"—he corrected himself—"the Blakes think well of themselves. I—I—am at sea. I—you will excuse me? I must get away."

The older man bowed and rose, as the boy stumbled to his feet. He stood standing while the erect young figure, staggering now a little, like a man in drink, crossed the floor and passed through the door.

"And that," he said aloud, as he seated himself again, "is what I might have had instead of wounds and scars from intruding where I was not wanted—that boy!" But seeing that the ladies at the next table stared at him, he relapsed into silence.

CHAPTER XII.

It seemed to Robert's mother, when he entered the house late that afternoon, that he had aged twenty years since morning. Only the flight of devastating time should have wasted his face so, she thought rebelliously. But her heart told her clearly enough what had passed over his experience since he left her that morning. She awaited his attack breathlessly.

"Mother," he said, after a little pause, "I lunched with—Fletcher to-

day. He told me many things which—it was better that I should know. He gave me some messages for you, which I shall write to you. I'm going away for a day or two, and it will be easier to write than to talk. There is only one thing I want to say now. Does—father—know?"

"Yes." It was like a sob, the single word.

"And forgave you, and reared me as he has done," mused Robert.

"Yes. Acknowledged you as his own. Brought you up so. Ah, Robert—loved you as his own, loved you as his own!"

"He has never let me feel it if he has not loved me so," said Robert gently. "My poor father! But, now, I see something which has been puzzling me. You wished Sylvia to be openly bound to me before father—I can never call him anything else—knew. Because you knew that he would not let me marry in ignorance of the blood that flows in my veins, because you knew that at last he would reveal the truth to me. And you wanted Sylvia's happiness and pride to urge upon him as a reason for not telling me. I see. Well—"

"Are you going to tell Sylvia?" the old woman moaned.

"I am going to tell Sylvia nothing that will hurt you. But I am going to let her off her engagement. She liked the one thing I had to offer her—the honor of the Blake family. Well, I shall let her know it is not mine to offer. I shall tell her I am a foundling. She won't want me, then." He laughed bitterly.

"Oh, Robert, how silly, how wrong-headed you are! I can manage your fa—my husband. I can keep him from speaking about it to either of you, in spite of his quixotic notions of honesty and responsibility in marriage. If only—"

"No, don't bother to scheme. I'm going to see Sylvia. And to let her off. And—I shall leave a letter for dad, and I'll write to you. I'll be better away for a day or two."

"Oh, Robert, my poor, abused, unhappy boy—you won't do anything

rash? You won't utterly ruin your poor mother's life?"

"Nothing rash at all. And don't you worry too much, poor soul! You—you must have had your own share of torment back there—when you didn't hear. Good night, mother, dear!" And again he stooped and kissed her withered cheek, and found it wet. She caught at his hand and kissed it and clung to it.

"There, there!" he said, patting her. And left her, feeling for the first time in all his years a grown man.

He had taken the precaution to telephone Mrs. Llewellyn's abode and to learn that Miss Sylvia Hardenbroeck was expected to be there that evening before he made his way out to Westchester. He found his thoughts more centred upon what he was going to say to her than upon the desolation in which he was about to involve himself. To be honest with Sylvia without utterly involving his mother—that was his task. To get it over and done—and then to get somewhere where he could rest. He felt like a swimmer, buffeted by waves that have nearly overwhelmed him. He wanted to rest!

There was more of a flutter of excitement caused by his arrival than seemed to him necessary. It was, he admitted, awkwardly near the eight o'clock dinner hour, and he had not been invited to dine. But unless Mrs. Llewellyn was entertaining formally, he thought that, as Sylvia's fiancé, he might be accorded a casual hospitality. There was anything but hospitality in the way in which his name was passed from servant to servant, and he himself was left in the smallest and most formal of reception rooms. However, here, at last, he learned that Miss Hardenbroeck would see him at once. And in a very few minutes after the announcement, Sylvia entered the little room.

She looked excited—he saw that in one glance. There was a feverish color on her cheeks, and her eyes were black with nervousness. There was something crisply determined about her manner, too. Preoccupied, as he was,

he could not but be impressed by her attitude.

She closed the door behind her, and came toward him. Her shimmering dinner gown fell away from her throat and shoulders, and they were lovely and milk-white. But, in his tension, his absorption in what he had to tell her, the delicacy of her beauty did not make its customary appeal to his senses.

"Bobby," she said, "I'm glad you've come." But it was said strangely, and he looked at her, as though for an explanation.

"Are you not going to kiss me?" she asked. He shook his head.

"Not until we have had a little talk," he told her.

"Ah! Some one has told you—you're angry. But—not for the last time, Bobby?"

"Oh, if you put it that way!" He kissed her lightly on her brow.

"A very cousinly caress—for a last one!" she remarked. Then, defiantly: "Well, Bobby, when did you hear it? How did you hear it? And—will you ever forgive me?"

Suddenly alert, on guard, he scrutinized her.

"You must tell me how it happened," he said warily.

"Well, dearest boy, we've both seen that we couldn't really make a success of it—haven't we?"

"Don't try to make me incriminate myself!"

"Oh, I'll take all the blame! I'm a mercenary beast, and that's the truth. But it took the near prospect of poverty to make me realize how deep-rooted was my love of luxury. So that, yesterday—after our quarrel—Oh, Bobby, why did we quarrel? When Aunt Mabel motored up with your dear old friend, Mr. Sweeney—"

Robert caught an exclamation, and held it firmly behind his teeth.

"And manipulated things so that he and I motored up the river together—well, I realized that we—you and I—had made a mistake. And to prevent its being irrevocable, I accepted Mr. Sweeney's offer of marriage on the way to Rhinebeck. Aunt Mabel telephoned

the glad tidings broadcast at once—and there's a family party to-night to celebrate the engagement."

"At which I should seem a little *de trop*?" He looked at her almost with a sense of amusement. Yesterday had cured him of vanity. His pride was not stabbed to the quick by her intelligence as it would have been had it not been already slain to death. He found himself full of a sort of relief and thanksgiving that he would not have to expose his poor mother to her search.

"I shan't pretend to think it likely that I shall ever like any one as I have liked you, Bobby," went on Sylvia, with that show of honesty with which people often cover their most dishonest deeds, "but I intend to make Mr. Sweeney a thoroughly good wife."

"I am sure that you will," replied Robert courteously. "And now, let me make my escape from this joyous gathering before I cast a damper upon any one."

"Bobby, I'm sorry," murmured Sylvia. She came near to him, and for the second time in his life he saw her lovely eyes beneath a veil of tears. "Can't we be friends?"

"At any rate, I shall have only friendly feelings for you, Sylvia," he answered evasively. "Good-by, for now."

"Good-by." She watched him a little breathlessly as he left the room. Once she started after him, but she controlled the impulse, and, shrugging her shoulders, stayed in the little drawing-room until she heard the heavy hall door close behind him.

The September twilight seemed chilly to him when he stood outside the brightly lighted house. A sense of loneliness smote him. He was tired, buffeted, spurned. And he found himself longing for the warmth and softness of that haven in which he had dreamed, only last night, that he had wept away his griefs. He found himself longing for the tender touch of Gertrude's hands. He did not question whether it was love or not; he only realized that with the deep needs of his nature he wanted her.

AFTER FIVE YEARS.

"My dear," said Mrs. Llewellyn, in her most practical manner to her niece, who sat, exquisitely gowned, but rather peevish looking, in her handsome and serviceable boudoir at her Westchester place, "do be sensible. What else could you expect? You have Scriptural warrant for it—Those that live by the sword shall perish by the sword,' or something of that sort. And those that grow rich by gambling shall grow poor by it! Why you couldn't have influenced Mr. Sweeney to give up his spectacular stock manipulations, I don't see!"

"If you had ever tried to influence him," grumbled Mrs. Sweeney, "the reason might be apparent to you. Of course, he'll recoup himself, but if Uncle Horace could have aided him at just this juncture——"

"I never interfere in Horace's affairs," said Mrs. Llewellyn sententiously. "But I doubt his being able to do anything for your husband just now. Anyway, my dear, you aren't in bad straits. Mr. Sweeney made a very handsome settlement upon you when you were married."

Sylvia puckered her face into a grimace.

"So he did! He 'borrowed' it back before the end of the second year, however. But, never mind—we shan't starve."

"Strange how things come out, isn't it?" philosophized Mrs. Llewellyn. "Now, there's your old flame, Robert Blake, receiving that fabulous legacy from a man named Fletcher, whose life he once saved or something of that sort, just at the time your husband is what Horace calls down and out. Hadn't you heard about it? I don't definitely know what this man Fletcher's debt of gratitude really was, but it

couldn't have been heavy, for he was a foreigner who was in this country only twice. At any rate, he found and developed some mines in some outlandish South African place, and when he died, a few months ago, behold Robert Blake was his chief legatee. Queer you didn't see it in the papers. And the money will be really wasted on them—they lead one of those existences which the poets would call 'ideal,' I suppose—wrapped up in each other and in their children, and their good works. She goes to Albany each winter as proudly as if it were the Court of St. James. I'm sure they don't spend more than six or seven thousand a year—and now they have millions thrust upon them! It's the irony of fate. Why, Sylvia!"

For a tear made an unexpected pearl among the laces on Sylvia's bosom. There was a moment's awkward pause. Then the aunt said, not unkindly:

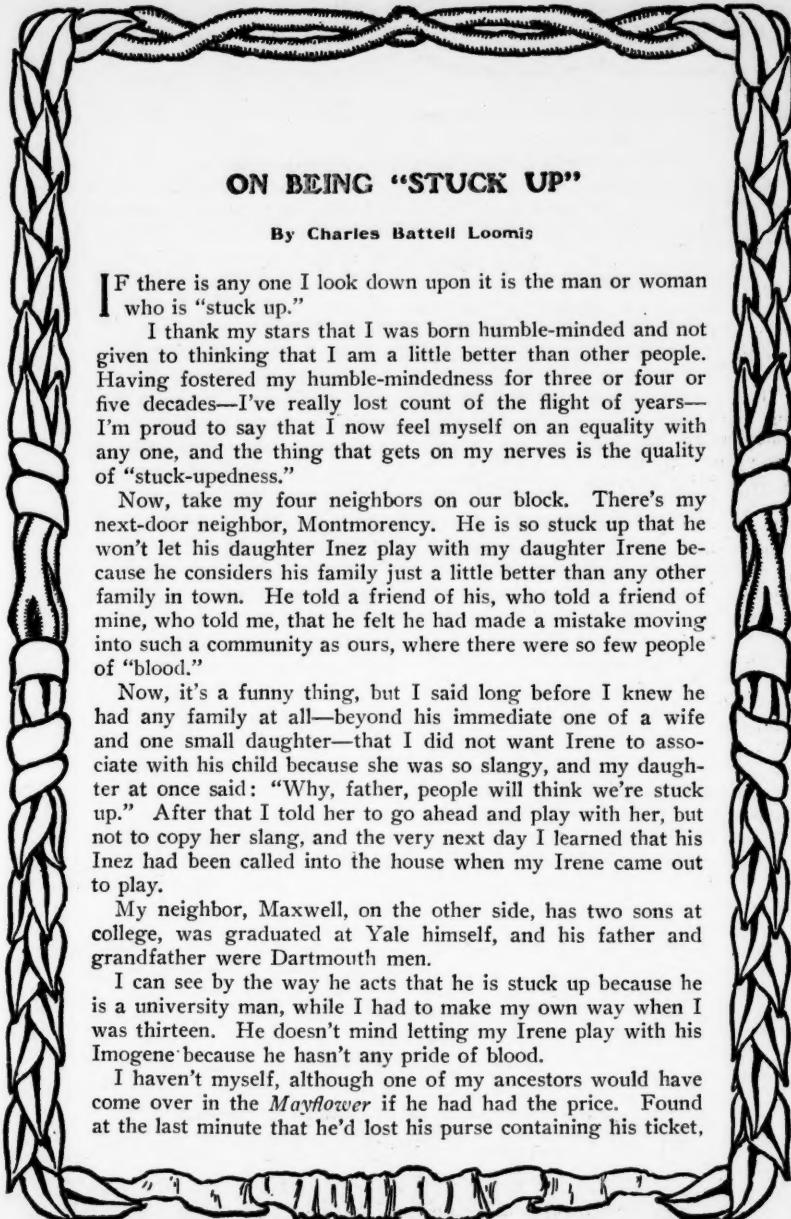
"I've been very stupid, my dear. But here is one thing I will do—I'll speak to Horace about helping your husband out of this hole; I know it's only a temporary one."

"Thank you, auntie," answered Sylvia, with quivering lips. She struggled for a minute to control herself, and then she gave in to her grief, and sobbed: "But it isn't that—it isn't that!"

"My dear, I know, I know." The older woman's eyes looked sadly back along a barren road, and she touched the bowed head kindly. "But you are not the only one. Even she—even the girl he married—be sure that she sheds her tears, too, sometimes. For she never forgets that he loved you first."

"She would not care," said Sylvia, with sudden divination of the truth. "For she is one of those women who live to give rather than to receive, and find more joy in loving than in being loved."





ON BEING "STUCK UP"

By Charles Battell Loomis

If there is any one I look down upon it is the man or woman who is "stuck up."

I thank my stars that I was born humble-minded and not given to thinking that I am a little better than other people. Having fostered my humble-mindedness for three or four or five decades—I've really lost count of the flight of years—I'm proud to say that I now feel myself on an equality with any one, and the thing that gets on my nerves is the quality of "stuck-upness."

Now, take my four neighbors on our block. There's my next-door neighbor, Montmorency. He is so stuck up that he won't let his daughter Inez play with my daughter Irene because he considers his family just a little better than any other family in town. He told a friend of his, who told a friend of mine, who told me, that he felt he had made a mistake moving into such a community as ours, where there were so few people of "blood."

Now, it's a funny thing, but I said long before I knew he had any family at all—beyond his immediate one of a wife and one small daughter—that I did not want Irene to associate with his child because she was so slangy, and my daughter at once said: "Why, father, people will think we're stuck up." After that I told her to go ahead and play with her, but not to copy her slang, and the very next day I learned that his Inez had been called into the house when my Irene came out to play.

My neighbor, Maxwell, on the other side, has two sons at college, was graduated at Yale himself, and his father and grandfather were Dartmouth men.

I can see by the way he acts that he is stuck up because he is a university man, while I had to make my own way when I was thirteen. He doesn't mind letting my Irene play with his Imogene because he hasn't any pride of blood.

I haven't myself, although one of my ancestors would have come over in the *Mayflower* if he had had the price. Found at the last minute that he'd lost his purse containing his ticket,

and while he was trying to get another the *Mayflower* sailed. Vexing, wasn't it?

Then there is Munson, who lives next door but one in the handsomest house on the block. He has pride of wealth, and while he lets his Ivy play with my Irene, she is always talking about the things her father's money can buy.

He rose from nothing himself, and so of course Montmorency's wife has never called on his wife; and he never had any schooling and is not at all given to letters, so Maxwell never has anything to say to him beyond being civil.

I insisted on our calling on him because I did not want him to feel that we were lacking in a friendly spirit, but he talked so incessantly about money and what he could do with it that I was very glad when the twenty minutes were over.

Next door to Munson lives McIntyre, and he really has the big head. He's a mechanical engineer and built a big bridge out in the Northwest somewhere and plumes himself on the strength of that achievement. He looks down on me because I'm only a penny-a-liner, but his daughter Iolanthe and my Irene are great chums.

There we have pride of birth, pride of intellect, pride of purse, and pride of achievement, and I rise superior to them all and am proud to say that, although I have not much birth, or brains, or money, or fame, I am as good as any of them—and if I were sure it would go no further I'd say a good deal better.

All of which may be considered an allegory because it stands to reason that you wouldn't find an Inez, an Irene, an Imogene, an Ivy, and an Iolanthe on one block of five houses. You certainly wouldn't want to.

But if you are inclined to plume yourself on your blue blood—in blissful ignorance of the fact that five generations back a wild young woman played havoc with the integrity of it—ask yourself what you have done by reason of your possession of blue blood to advance mankind.

If you're really blue-blooded, *noblesse oblige* for yours, you know.

And if you laugh at the claims of birth, but gloat over the fact that for four generations you and yours have gone—perhaps idling—through college, what have you done with the learning you ought certainly to have? Have you become merely a hermetically sealed storehouse of learning with never a leak anywhere?

Whenever you mount the soap box you ought to try to pull

less fortunate folks to your level. A well-filled think tank with no tap is like a cake of ice in a safe deposit vault in July.

And if you think that in these days the mere possession of money, which rightfully or not has come to have a decided taint whenever it is noticed in large quantities, is sufficient cause for you to pile a half dozen soap boxes on end and stand crowing on the topmost one, look out that some unusual upheaval of the earth does not topple you and your soap boxes over.

More than to the man of blood and the man of brains it is up to you—six soap boxes up—to do something with the thing of which you are so proud.

Time was when men kotowed to riches and looked with awe on a mere pile of wealth supporting a very ordinary human being, but our muck rakers have done a good deal to change all that.

Incessant muck raking may not be good, but we Americans owe the muck rakers a debt of gratitude for reducing Mere Riches to his proper level.

I know a man who taught his sons to be particular in their choice of friends among their schoolmates, but to be especially particular if the boys had money. The result was that if a schoolmate had money the burden of proof that he was all right rested on him. This might have led to another kind of pride, but as a matter of fact it worked out well. Wealth held no glamour for those boys. Their eyes looked out level with the rest of the world, and so long as a boy was kindly and interesting the state of his finances did not interest them.

If you are inclined to get the soap-box habit because of your achievements look out for yourself. The world is full of those who have achieved, and you may remember that the name of the energetic gentleman who planned the pyramids has been forgotten many hot Egyptian summers.

The soap box is a tempting place, and there are few of us who are really alive but have stepped to its meagre platform from time to time in order to look down on the rest of the world, but let us not forget that from the distance of, say, a couple of stars beyond Mars, none of us is of a very heroic height, and if any one of us were to be run over by a heavily loaded junk wagon, not pride of birth, or pride of intellect, or pride of purse, or yet pride of achievement would save us from a humiliating, and perhaps fatal, injury.

And remember also that soap boxes are ridiculously cheap and that many grocers give them away.



Facing that, I felt my courage ooze.

My Stage Career

By Virginia Middleton

II.

[*The first of these articles, descriptive of the actual experiences of an average girl, ambitious for a stage career, appeared in the November number of this magazine.*]

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

IN the blue serge, accordingly, I marched up sunny, dusty Broadway one summer forenoon about a week after my arrival in New York. As I approached the region of the theatres and the offices, I met many whom the pricking in my thumbs, or some such subtle sense, told me were professionals. Sometimes little groups of them congregated on the outer edge of the pavement and talked with much gesticulation. There were a good many bleached heads in the curb gatherings, a great many Eiffel Tower heels, some quite remarkable effects in dress and hats and imitation jewelry. I felt the annoyance of the staid and prospering actor at those who thus, by their cheap conspicuously, brought an ill-renown

upon my honored calling. But by the time I reached the doorway between a picture shop and a gents' furnishing shop, which bore the number of Mr. Greenfelt's offices, there was no room left in me for criticism of any one or anything. I felt "all gone" at the pit of my stomach. I took a turn around the block before entering that hallway. Then I stared at the pictures in the picture dealer's window—there's a certain malarial green landscape color which I cannot see to this day without a qualm of sickness, a nervous chill. I may have stared at the gents' furnishings, too—sometimes cravats and striped shirts give me sensations which may be attributable to the subconscious recollections of that hour.

Finally, I took my courage in hand and plunged into the narrow entrance. I mounted the stairs to the second floor. A long, narrow hall, like the passage before a tier of cells, ran along before a set of rooms, closed by ground-glass doors, partitioned from one another, and labeled with various names and an ominous "Private" after each one. At the end of the corridor, and stretching across it, was a big room, through the open door of which I caught reassuring glimpses of human figures. By and by, my blinded eyes made out an arrow on the wall, pointing toward that apartment, and thither I went, forgetting entirely the self-possessed, easy, dignified gait which I had determined to adopt on this great occasion.

The room seemed full of women. At first I had only a dazed impression of a great number of them. Later, I saw that we were not more than a dozen. A small boy was custodian of the room. He lounged up to me as I stood, the embarrassed cynosure of all eyes—all of them appraising, hostile—and demanded to know my business. I asked to see Mr. Greenfelt, and a faint giggle pervaded the assembly.

"He can't see you," the boy assured me.

"I have a letter to him," I explained haughtily.

"Don't make no difference. He ain't goin' to see any one this mornin'. Mr. Drew's in with him now, a fixin' up for a release from Frohman, an' he'll be busy all the mornin'." The boy winked.

"Don't you be so fresh, Tommy," advised one of the women, who had finished her measuring of me. "Don't mind what he says, Miss—er—Mr. Greenfelt is busy, I suppose, but it's Mr. Ferret who sees everybody, anyway. I suppose you're here for a position?"

It was an old woman who spoke—a woman of sixty, with a battered face on which the inartistic make-up was thick, but not thick enough to disguise the weariness of the eyes or to conceal the lines of ravagement. But never had human voice sounded so kind to me as

hers did there in that big, bare, dusty, uninviting room. I fairly blessed her as I stumbled a reply.

"Tommy," she said, with an air of authority, to the office boy. "You just take Miss—er—"

"Pierson," murmured I.

"Pierson's card to Mr. Ferret and tell him that she's come with a letter from—"

"Mr. Angus Pennington," I supplied, not without some pride.

"Mr. Angus Pennington, of the *Spear*," repeated the old lady.

Then as Tommy, with an air of general disrespect, departed, she added: "Know Pennington well?"

I cannot tell how disagreeable to me was that sound heard for the first time from the lips of a woman—a man's last name, without its prefix. It was absurd in me, of course, but I hated it—that little, scarcely noticeable sign of a relaxed code of manners prevailing among stage people. I mentally kicked myself for my narrow-mindedness, as I explained to my interlocutor that I did not know Mr. Pennington at all well.

The old lady dropped into silence at this, and I looked about me. There were photographs of stage favorites—especially those of Mr. Greenfelt's companies—on the chocolate and green and gilt walls; there were a few posters of new plays. But chiefly and foremost and most menacingly there was a placard, which read:

No new applications will be considered.

Facing that, I felt my courage ooze. One of the younger women, who had not allowed her conversation with a sister actress concerning the shortcomings of a third to interfere with a study of me, reassured me.

"Nothin' in that," she said, nodding her Gainsborough-hatted head toward the forbidding sign. "Hangs there from one year's end to the next. What's your line?"

I lacked the moral courage to proclaim myself a perfect novice, and the immoral courage to lie was not mine. So I said nothing, but sat still and

blushed violently. The astute young lady understood and laughed.

"I'm sorry for you," she said. "I was there once myself, though. Well, my dear," turning to her friend, "she signed for eighty and her costumes, but what good did it do her, when the piece just fell flat the first night? And since—well, she says she likes the country and that it's an awful long time, anyway, since she saw her folks."

All about me the buzzing was of contracts and of successes which had been miraculously attained by indifferent actresses, and of failures sustained by the most meritorious. Personal reminiscences seemed to form a large part of the second class of anecdotes. Now and then, Tommy would stroll up to one of the women and would tell her to follow him. A bell from somewhere in the interior aroused in that youth the only appearance of alacrity which he ever assumed. Occasionally, one of the girls would aver that she was tired of waiting, or would say that she had a "date," and would saunter off. At the end of two hours I seized the reluctant Tommy—who had been out to his own lunch in the meantime—and asked him if he had given my message to Mr. Ferret.

"Yep," said Tommy. "And he said to tell you to wait, but I guess he forgot you, for he's gone."

"Out to lunch?" I suggested.

"Reckon he'll take a snack of something while he's gone," opined Tommy impertinently. "But he won't be back to-day."

I went out, hungry, sore, ashamed, angry. And there entered into me the burning desire to bestow my talents upon some other manager, and thereby to requite Messrs. Greenfelt and Ferret. After I had eaten a bun and drunk a glass of milk in a dairy around the corner, I actually made a list of theatrical agencies, and visited three, all of which made Mr. Greenfelt's offices seem rather elegant and sumptuous by contrast. In each I registered, a man who invariably wore a hat upon the side of his head and a cigar stub in one corner of his mouth taking my fee,

my name and address, and my lack of experience, with a covert grin.

The next day, again to Mr. Greenfelt's. He was at Rye, and Mr. Ferret had been called away by business connected with a company playing the summer circuit. The next day Mr. Ferret merely sent out word that he couldn't see me that day. "Says to come tomorrow at nine and he'll try to," quoth Tommy.

The next day I was there when the scrubwoman was still swabbing up the floors. But that morning I succeeded. Mr. Ferret would see me. Frightened half to death, I followed Tommy through a couple of the small cheese boxes and finally entered Mr. Ferret's sanctum, just outside Mr. Greenfelt's own.

A man, small, sharp-featured, sallow, and middle-aged, leaned back in his chair and surveyed me. There are no words—not even a past master of language could have words—to describe Mr. Ferret's air in surveying me. It was measurelessly cold and impersonal. But he left not one feature, not one curve, unrecorded. I was speechless before that look. All my carefully rehearsed speeches of airiness, of ease, of wit, had flown.

"Miss—er," said Mr. Ferret wearily, when he had finished his study of me. "Miss—er—"

"Pierson," I found voice to tell him. "I have a note to you—to Mr. Greenfelt, rather—from Mr. Pennington, of the *Spear*."

Mr. Ferret extended his hand without a word. I placed Mr. Pennington's note in it, and watched the immobile countenance while he read it.

"Um—er," he said, when he had finished. "It's as much as Pennington can do to tell an actress when she's made. What experience?"

Never did any words sound more banal than those I tried to utter easily: "No professional experience."

Mr. Ferret allowed his face an expression of the liveliest consternation.

"Not an amateur?" he besought me. "Good Lord! Not an amateur?"

I have since learned that this was

with some coaching which he would give me himself. It was clear that I had the voice, the temperament. But I'd have to put up a hundred dollars as a guaranty of my good faith. My spirits fell.

"Of course it's only fair if you're going to share the profits," said Mrs. Frontenac.

I pulled myself together and declared that it was out of the question. In fifteen minutes the manager came down to fifty dollars. I yielded. I hurried down to my boarding house and dug into my poor little hoard. Then I went back to Mrs. Frontenac's and delivered over the money, also signing an iron-bound contract.

We had not even a rehearsal. For one mysterious reason after another, rehearsals were postponed. And one day when I went to Aunt Sally Frontenac's, she and Miss Montecalme welcomed me with tears and tragic embraces. How horribly they had been deceived in Mr. Watson-Wilkes! I trembled. He had played everybody false—he had run away—it was abominable! But never, while Mrs. Frontenac had two rooms, should I lack a home.

Even yet I am not entirely sure that they were his confederates. There are moments when I see Aunt Sallie, more valiantly black and pink as the years go on, more loud in her asseverations of friendship to all the world, more crowded and dingy, I am told, in her one room—it has dwindled to one, now—and I am not quite sure that she was the first-aid-to-a-swindler of a common sort who flourishes upon the ambition of ignorant young men and women. At that time I only realized that we were well into August, and that I was well below the hundred-dollar limit.

By this time I was registered at every agency which had little enough regard for the relation of client and agent to take my fee; and there are comparatively few which will not take your money, no matter how infinitesimal is the chance of getting you anything to do. The words of Mr. Ferret in re-

gard to my lack of instruction in the art of acting had bitten deep, especially after the Frontenac-Watson-Wilkes-Montecalme swindle had shown me how much I needed instruction in everything; in the very first principles of prudence, for example.

I put in a little of my abundant leisure in looking into the matter of the schools. I found that for prices ranging from three hundred to five hundred dollars a year an aspirant for stage career might take an excellent two-year course of instruction under good teachers, and might have one or two public appearances. She might learn, under the least harrowing conditions, how to go on and off a real stage, how to make up, how to talk, walk, smile, dance; she might have courses in high tragedy and in low comedy. Real rehearsals would be hers, and an occasional chance to test her capacity before a friendly audience. But all the training, instead of being in the critical atmosphere of the public, would be received in the most cordial, mellow, kind-hearted society. The teachers, rightly and naturally enough, aim to discover the good points in their pupils, not the bad ones; and to develop the good ones. In short, a dramatic school gives a stage aspirant the training which the old-fashioned stock company would give, could the stage aspirant get a position in an old-fashioned stock company, but minus the tonic effect of actual criticism. And at the school, the stage aspirant pays, and pays quite well, while in the stock company she is paid. I decided that it was the stock company for mine, as we say nowadays. The only trouble was that the stock company didn't seem to reciprocate.

When I look back upon that period of stress and distress, I sometimes wonder how I endured it all. I had been, in a small way, "somebody" at home; here I was nobody—the football of office boys, the jest of clerks, the repudiated bore of the managers. I was used to a free and open-air existence. Here I lived in a small, stuffy hall room, and my monotonous exer-



She revealed the imposing contents of her make-up box and proceeded to give me a practical lesson in the art of stage beautifying.

cises were patrols of the pavements between managers' offices. Sometimes I took a trolley ride, but after my *Juliet* experience, I counted even my nickels with a jealous miserliness. How I managed to write cheerful letters home is a mystery to me now. I am led again to marvel at the blessed blindness of parents. To think that mine could not read between the lines and see that I was miserable—excited, discouraged, astonished, heartsick.

One experience, which many women claim, never befell me in my early job-hunting days. No manager ever made me overtures which could wound my self-respect. I know some actresses, in whose truthfulness I have a profound belief, who declare that their appearance in an office seeking a position has often been the prelude to insult; I also know many, for whose word I would not give a picayune, who make the same assertion. I only know it never happened to me. I dare say this very fact—that no insult, covert or open, no suggestion of a possible disgraceful

price for a chance to succeed, was ever made to me—is an indication of one of the causes of my comparative obscurity after many years of conscientious stage work. I have not the emotional “temperament” to excite the unruly admiration of men of refined emotions, and I have not the striking physical attractions to excite the possessive admiration of the merely brutal. And that, no doubt, is why I am now only a good utility woman, and not a reigning favorite, with managers competing for my services and millionairesses for my presence at their receptions.

By and by, I was washing not only my handkerchiefs and stockings in the bowl in my room, but most of my other clothes in the bathtub, and I had stopped eating my dinners in the boarding house, on the flimsy pretext that “I was dining out so much”—I was “dining out” in a bakery on Third Avenue! I had lost whatever freshness I had when I arrived. I was shabby—and there is no profession in the entire world in which a lacklustre air, in

clothes or in person, is so utterly fatal as in the theatrical profession. And I was down to six dollars!

I hate to think what the end might have been but for the return of the Penningtons! Of course, he had forgotten me, but I, who wrote the truth about the situation to no one else, wrote it to Deering White, laying upon him, however, strict injunctions to secrecy. He obeyed by sending my letter to his friend Pennington, just back from England. Mr. and Mrs. Pennington came to call upon me in the hot, smelly drawing-room of the Stuyvesant Square boarding house, and they took me out to dinner. A dinner must be a good one to linger in the recollection of one of the diners for twelve years or so, but I remember every item of that one, from the little-neck clams to the Nesselrode pudding, and I remember the kind faces of those two dear old people. They seemed old to my twenty years. In reality, they were only in the early fifties. And just then a long-deferred success of their own had made them especially tender to failure. Mr. Pennington had had a play accepted by a young actor, who had just been launched as an independent star.

"My dear, I think it only fair to repeat to you what I said before," said Mr. Pennington to me. "Go home and make some young man happy, or become a teacher of cookery or a maker of burnt-wood novelties. You'll be happier and richer at the end of ten years if you do. I am almost sure that you have not the qualities that make a great actress or even what counts as a great actress in these degenerate days. You're a dear girl, very honest and charming and enthusiastic and pretty. But—the thing that 'carries' across the footlights—I don't believe you've got it. Good heavens, why should you have it? Not ten women in the leading companies have it. You've got what is undoubtedly a great deal better, nobler, finer, and all the rest. But you haven't got *IT*. Without it you'll never go very far. You'll be at best a mediocre actress, respected

but not madly sought by the managers. You'll be one of that great throng of stage women who spend at least a third of their lives in looking for work, and another third in doing poorly paid work which is uncongenial, and the other in uncongenial work which is a little better paid. But you don't believe a word I'm saying, and you want your chance. You feel sure that with that you could convince even me that there was one great actress in the world to-day. Well, you shall have it. Hampton will give you a speaking part in my 'Debbie.' And, after that—"

But after that the future was to be a golden, glorious dream. The happy tears filled my eyes. "Oh, you'll see—you'll see!" I told him. And Mrs. Pennington patted my hand across the table and told me not to pay any attention to Angus' gloomy remarks. He had just made them as a matter of principle, she assured me—and, indeed, I believed it.

What a drunken, glad, gay letter I wrote home that night! A speaking part—twenty dollars a week—my foot firmly upon the ladder—the ladder of gold that led straight to the shining galaxy of the stars! The dear people sent me a telegram of congratulation when they received that document of mine. They were hardly less credulous than I myself, after all.

I went to sleep that night to a melodious chime of silvery bells that played the sweetest tune:

"A speaking part—twenty dollars a week!"

But I waked, shivering. Suppose I had not had that letter to that kind-hearted man, and that he had not cared so fondly for Deering White? Or suppose he had not been a playwright? What must have become of me? And how could girls who had no introductions at all ever gain their first foothold? I tried to figure it out, as I have tried many times since. And then, and later, it has always been a mystery passing my understanding how any woman who has neither introduction—"pull" is the vulgar name for it—nor money, ever gets her start.

Unless, of course, she is a person of positively supreme personal beauty. There are thousands of nice-looking women in the world. Obviously, a manager cannot engage his actresses on that recommendation alone. And even the supreme beauty will never be seen by the manager whom she is besieging unless she has some sort of an introduction to him.

A woman may have the voice of Sara Bernhardt, but what good will it do her until a manager has heard it? She may be an Eleanora Duse for tragedy, but how can she convince a manager, who is too busy to see her, of that? Even when she has a note to a manager, even when, by dint of tremendous perseverance, of making a perfect nuisance of herself, she is given her ten minutes with him, how is she going to impress him with the idea that here is the incomparable *Magda*? He certainly isn't going to let her do a scene from the play there in his smoke-scented, smoke-clouded office—even if she could do it to save her life!

I suppose it is possible to keep on and on and on—mounting the narrow stairs day after day, waiting in the grimy offices, submitting to the flippancies of the office boy, until, some day, Fate, fairly worn out, relents, and the manager sees you, and the ascent to stellar glory is begun. But one needs the patience of a rock monument and a considerable income to play that waiting game.

Of course, if one can go to a school, and if a manager sees one at a gala performance, and thinks one will do for the drawing-room scene in the new play he is putting on next season, one may escape many heart-breaking experiences. And if one is born into a stage family, as Ellen Terry was, as Maude Adams and the Drews and Barrymores were, the path is comparatively straight, if one has stage aspirations and talent. And if one has money—money to hire halls, to pay companies, to prove her own estimate of herself to the world and the critics—then it is easy. But, considering how

difficult it is for all the rest of the world, was I not a lucky girl to be assured of a speaking part and twenty dollars a week?

It was an inspiring and important thing to sign a contract, even if that contract did seem to provide for every possible chance to get rid of me and to make my life a burden if I wasn't gotten rid of. But what recked I of the powerful rights of "the party of the first part" or of the comparative insignificance of "the party of the second part"? The party of the second part had a speaking part, and that was enough for her at the time. The fact that I made only one appearance, and on that occasion said exactly eight words, did not militate against my contentment.

At rehearsals, which were held in a hall on the East Side, I had my first disillusionment. Where was that delightful democracy of the stage of which I had had such happy visions? Where was the leading man discerning the intelligence of the wardrobe woman, and asking her advice? Where was the leading woman's gentle courtesy to strangers? Where were the luncheons after the rehearsals? I suppose my ideas of stage life were a rehash of the *Vincent Crummleses* in "Nicholas Nickleby" and similar chronicles. It was a blow to find that there is probably no place outside of India where the caste system is so firmly entrenched as in a theatrical company. The better-known members of the company made some little show of cordiality among themselves; I was ignored. Even the stage manager, from whom I had expected a little attention, appeared entirely unconcerned about the manner in which I delivered myself of my eight words: "I am to say, then, madame is home?" The men and women in their ordinary street clothes, with their air of familiarity with the performance, were extremely uninspiring. Only poor Mr. Pennington and the star seemed to take any very lively interest in the production. Of course, as a matter of fact, though I did not then realize it, every one was discon-



I took my stand before my mirror and began grimacing and saying to myself, "I am to say, then, madame is home?"

tented with his or her own part in the play, except the star and me. The woman who supported the star sulked because some of his importance was not shorn down to accentuate her part; the "old man" rumbled angrily because he was not on the stage more than half of each act. The "old woman" said that it was well known that she was

especially happy in tart, sprightly old-woman parts; why couldn't she have had at least a few vivacious words written into her meek-and-mealy-mouthed part? And so on and so on. Only the star and I, as I have said, were completely happy.

We opened in Hartford. Poor father, in view of my brilliant pros-

pects—oh, the speaking part and the twenty dollars a week, after the play actually opened, and before it closed! —had sent me another fifty dollars, and I was once again easy in my mind in regard to my laundry bills. We were to play a week in the Connecticut cities, and were then to play a New York engagement. I didn't ride to Hartford in a common coach—though, as a matter of fact, that was exactly what I did do, for the traveling expenses for which the company manager is liable include only the actual cost of transportation in the case of small fry like myself; Pullmans, sleepers, diners, and such elegancies are ours at our risk! But, that time, I soared through ethereal spaces. I beamed upon my fellow passengers. I had timidly asked the "old woman" where to put up in Hartford—for, of course, my living expenses were not paid—and had been rather snubbed. She was going to the Helvetic House, she said, and she really didn't happen to know of any of the less expensive places. The so-called "juvenile" came languidly to my aid in the business. He was a man of forty, but as he had a lithe, slim figure and a face that seemed to lend itself to humor, he would probably be a juvenile as long as he was anything at all. I did not particularly care for him. He didn't look wholesome, for all the careful grooming that he practiced on and off the stage, and his manner with those members of the company with whom he had any acquaintance at all seemed to me much less well-groomed than his person. However, I could not help feeling grateful when he told me about a cozy, cheap, little inn—it was thus he described it—where he always put up in Hartford when he happened to be "broke"—as he was on this particular occasion, he added.

The cozy little inn was merely a second-class hotel, but I was not over-critical. I ate my dinner, not in the hotel dining room, but at a bake shop I had noticed in the neighborhood as we had ridden—in a street car—to the hostelry. I ate it at five o'clock. You

see, I wanted to be in time at the theatre; I had been instructed to arrive at seven sharp. I arrived at five-thirty—but I was ashamed to try to effect an entrance. I walked around the streets for nearly an hour, saying over and over to myself, as I had practiced before the mirror every night for the past blessed fortnight: "I am to say, then—madame is home?" Sometimes I said, with an air of exaggerated surprise—"I-am-to-say-then—madame is home?" Sometimes I did it airily: "I am-to-say-then, madame-is-home?" Sometimes I lisped it, sometimes I boomed it forth. Sometimes I said: "I am to say, then, *madame* is home?" And sometimes I tried it: "I am to say, then, *madame* is *home*?" Occasionally, it was: "I am to say, then, *madame* *is* home?" Oh, it was a lesson to me in the wonderful variety of things which the same simple words may be made to mean, that silly little speech which I kept on repeating and mouthing to myself in the streets of Hartford that late September afternoon, until I found myself being stared at.

When, at half-past six, I presented myself at the stage entrance of the theatre, the doorkeeper eyed me with some disfavor. He told me where to find the dressing room to which I was assigned, and, with beating heart, icy hands, hot cheeks, and a general impression that the whole world was buzzing with "I am to say, then, madame is home?" I made my way thither. In spite of my long amateur career, and of my rehearsals, it was my first appearance behind the scenes in any real theatre, and I was startled by it. The lumbering scenery, the pasteboard mountains, the seas of cambric, the queer, long, dark aisles made by the scenery, the pulleys, the boards—so this was what made the exquisite scenes we gazed at, enraptured, from the other side. Of course, I had known it all theoretically, but alone there that autumn evening it came as a new fact to me.

The dressing room to which I was assigned, in company with the two charming ingénues which the piece de-

manded, the old woman and a secondary old woman, was down cellar, and most singularly damp and chill it seemed to me. This was different from the rose-hung boudoir effects which I had always had in my mind's eyes as an actress' dressing room. I looked at the rickety dressing tables before the mirrors with a good deal of disfavor. Then I sat down before one of them—I would "make up" early. Then I arose again. Did it become me, a miserable neophyte, to be selecting my own dressing table when ingénues and old women were to be heard on the subject of their preferences yet?

They came in just at seven, the whole bunch of them. All sorts of exciting noises began to sound—the moving of heavy scenery, the call of the bellboy, the demand of the manager as to the whereabouts of Mr. Temple—he was my "juvenile" friend—and a general confusion. The group of four, which swept into the barnlike room in which I was, were volubly talking together. They nodded indifferently toward me, and promptly grabbed, each one of them, the best table she could. I was left with a cracked mirror and a defective light for my portion. I took them humbly and began to work with my face and the contents of my modest make-up box. I had brought what I had found quite enough for the amateur theatricals in Windy River—powder, rouge, and a little black for my eyes. I was gingerly applying them—wishing with all my yearning girl's heart that some one would say to me: "What a sweet kimono you have on," for it was lovely, and my dear mother had made it for me—when I became conscious of the amused but not wholly hostile scrutiny of the girl next me. Finally, she spoke to me—she and the others had been reviling the accommodations, calling the leading woman a pig, and generally finding fault ever since they arrived.

"Are you goin' on like that?" she demanded, in her illiterate voice, looking at me pertly, out of her funny little triangular face.

"Why—why, yes," I faltered. "Why shouldn't I?"

"Nobody ever taught you anything about make-up?" she demanded.

"Why, I've read—"

"Oh, read!" with infinite contempt. "You've been an amachoor, haven't you?"

Hotly, I admitted the degrading charge.

"Thought so. Make-up like one. See here." She revealed the imposing contents of her make-up box and proceeded to give me a practical lesson in the art of stage beautifying. First, she liberally smeared her face, throat, and shoulders with grease paint of a ravishing flesh color. Then she rubbed her rouge stick freely upon her cheeks. Then she powdered thickly and put more rouge on her cheeks, and a little in the corners of her eyes. On the top of her eyes she put a little bluish paint, and she used a blue pencil to elongate them, explaining in the meantime that, of course, it depended upon what sort of a character one was impersonating whether one used dark blue or light blue, or much blue or little, and all the rest.

"Of course, it doesn't matter much about you," she added carelessly. "You're only the maid, and no one will notice what you look like." At the same time, she winked her eyelashes rapidly against a piece of cork, which she had held on the end of a hairpin, and rubbed against a heated kohl stick.

I took her instructions gratefully and accepted the position assigned to me humbly enough. Outside there was more confusion—more rolling scenery, more managerial calls, more monotonous intonations by the menacing call-boy, making his rounds to see if all the cast is in their dressing rooms. In the midst of so much important bustle, I felt my own tremendous insignificance. I also became afflicted with the most horrible misgivings. Suppose I should grow suddenly deaf and not hear my cue? It was a little thing to say—"I am to say, then, madame is home"—but it had to be said at the right time! Suppose my voice re-

mained steadfastly where it was now—in the toes of my slippers, or the pit of my stomach, or somewhere equally remote from the organs of speech? Suppose I should be paralyzed?

And until I heard that cue, toward the end of the first act, where should I stay? I had been expressly and not too gently forbidden to loiter in the wings? Oh, what should I do, what should I do? My face burned—I felt each flake of powder, each particle of paint upon my cheeks, so sensitive had my whole body become. My hands were two large, inert, useless lumps. My feet were two stationary blocks of ice. I could hear nothing—

I suppose that I heard my cue, that I responded to it, that I asked madame's instructions concerning her message to her visitor. I do not know any of these things of my own knowledge. I only know that at the end of the first act—toward the end of the first act, rather—I found myself off the stage with the consciousness that *I had done it.*

There was nothing else to do the rest of the evening. I had no other appearance. The wings were horribly draughty, and I was beginning to feel the same interest in my voice as a singer. The dressing room was impossible. I went back to the cozy little inn, entered it by the side door, catching sight of the bar in so doing, and having my nostrils saluted by the odor of many alcoholic beverages. I went up to my room and made ready for bed. I had been a little frightened coming from the theatre—a singing drunkard had brushed against me, and a nonsinging one had made me the centre of a moment's excitement while he had rebuked his brother in booze for the occurrence. I was nervous. I couldn't sleep. The gas was too high and too poor for me to read by.

By and by I took my stand before my mirror and began grimacing with my poor, tired face, and saying to myself, with every possible variation of facial and verbal expression: "I am to say, then, madame is home?"



Song

WHEN all the lane was thick with leaves
Between my sweetheart's home and mine,
I could not see its low, brown eaves,
Nor catch, at night, her candle-shine.

But now, when sparrows fret with cold,
And every branch is bare and stark,
I watch her panes a-glint with gold,
Or bravely streaking all the dark.

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

SOME LETTERS AND A SCRIPT



BY
**FANNIE
HEASLIP
LEA**

Author of "An Idyll of St. Roch's," "The Youngest Bridesmaid," etc.

(1)
801 St. Charles St.,
New Orleans.

AUF Wiedersehen! You are running away, but you will be coming back to me. Love's not so common that you can pass it by with a nod and a smile. And you are running away. I'd swear to that. You are afraid of me. You know I can make you care—and you don't want to care because you have promised to marry Mr. Haynes, who would be a very safe investment—only you are not going to marry him.

Aren't you afraid? Honest, now! Can you trust yourself not to answer when I call you? We'll see, Goldilocks!

When your train pulled out last night, I went back to the office and turned in my stuff; afterward I went home—it's a big word for a boarding house—and sat, the rest of the night, on the window sill, blinking at the stars, and trying to smoke out the

thought of you. It wasn't much use. Your blue eyes and your tormenting mouth, and your little soft hands have a trick of staying by me.

While I think of it—your mother told me, quite sympathetically, that you would possibly be gone two months! *One*, you told me. Not that it makes an enormous difference. I rather like to think that for some quaint reason of your own, you found it necessary to prevaricate. It shows that you weren't quite so indifferent as you seemed.

Anyhow, the things I want you to know can be written. I'll trust your curiosity for answers.

I think your mother likes me. She turned to me very naturally last night, after you had gone, and when Haynes might more appropriately have taken her back to the car.

She's a delightful sort of mother, isn't she?

Give me half interest in her, dear—I haven't had any mother since I was a kid, and I like yours. I like her soft,

gray hair, and her laugh, and the extinguishable fun in her eyes. It occurs to me that if sixty years haven't dimmed her sense of humor, they won't yours. You ought to be, at sixty, rather a charming old lady, to sit across the fire from, with your glasses shining in the light, and your pretty hands folded. A man, even a stoop-shouldered veteran of life, might not always be sure of staying—across the fire.

Goldilocks, listen! I love you.

Say it over to yourself in the silence, when you wake up at night, and remember that I shall be saying it, too.

I love your hair and your eyes and your mouth and your hands and you—exquisite, vain, little you.

I love you because you are small, and because you are sweet, and because you are cruel. There are a lot of other little reasons, but they can wait. I'll say them into your ear some time, and you will shiver with happiness to hear them. Fight away, Goldilocks—I shouldn't want a girl who didn't fight me—but, in the end, things will be as I say—"and they lived happily ever after."

July 3, '08.

Yours, dear,
LARRY.

(2)

696 Bloor St.,
Toronto, Canada.

MY DEAR LARRY: How awfully foolish you are! I laughed for a good ten minutes over your letter. It wasn't a polite letter to begin with. You know it isn't usually considered good form to make love to a girl who's engaged to another man—you meant to make love to me, didn't you?—that's what we call a social error, Larry. I'm sure you wouldn't have done it, if you'd known. Because, after all, you are an awfully nice boy, and I'm rather fond of you, so long as you avoid melodrama. Yes, I'm going to be here two months. I can't think how you misunderstood me. I'm having a very delightful time. The Canadian men are less excitable than you-all at home, but when they really get their emotions going, why, it's distinctly interesting. They express themselves so bluntly. I always distrust a man who can tell me

how he loves me, and make it sound like a page from "The Fighting Chance"—now you are *so* fluent. It's generally an indication that he's had lots of experience, and isn't given to losing his head, anyhow. Don't you think so?

On the other hand, the man who steps on your foot while asking for your hand, doesn't look just like a safe investment—that was what you called Robert, wasn't it?

By the way, if you are going to make little sneering speeches about Mr. Haynes, I won't write to you at all. He is a good man—a great deal better than most I know—and, besides, I am engaged to him—I can't listen to you.

Did I tell you your red roses stayed fresh three days? You always remember, Larry. There is a man here who sends me cartloads of white ones, and you know how I hate them. White roses make me think of little dead children.

I can't write you a longer letter. I have to dress for a dance at the Yacht Club to-night—there is a moon, too—and to-morrow we are going to motor out to a country place—Mrs. Doane's sister's—for the week-end. I am frightfully gay. Some one at a studio party the other night named me the Dresden Girl, and Mrs. Doane says I am becoming almost a fad. So, you see, I haven't time to answer any questions—did you ask me anything else?

Be a good boy, Larry—and don't be silly.

In the maddest haste,
July 12, '08. CYNTHIA.

(3)

Times Office,
Camp St., New Orleans.

Did I ask you anything else? If that weren't so transparent an evasion, I should have minded. As it is, I'm rather pleased, even with the accurate details of your gayety, and the man who sends you cartloads of white roses. There are always men about—I know that. You don't fret me in the least by your airy enumeration. As for Haynes—who ever said he wasn't good? He's

much too good for a dear little, bad little girl like you. I'm told he even goes to church on Sundays, and carries the plate. The rumor may be exaggerated, however.

What you want is some one more on a level. You'd have a crick in your neck, from looking up to him, before the honeymoon was past its first quarter. You want some one who'll forgive your peccadilloes because it's you. Haynes would inevitably starch and iron them out of you. You'd come out of the process with all your fluffy ruffles stiffly fluted. Why—I'll bet he calls you Cynthia, just as your unseeing relatives do. The flickering soul of you—the thing of fragrance and flame and dew that inhabits your butterfly body—he doesn't so much as suspect—does he, now?

Don't be a goose, Goldilocks—not every woman finds her needle in the haystack. Be sure you don't let yours slip.

It's an abominably hot night, and I am presently going to write the cheerful tale of two low-browed dagoes, who, a few hours ago, stabbed each other artistically, if insufficiently, by moonlight. Your same moon! It sees a number of things of which the world is full.

I had very much rather go out to the park and lie on the wet grass, and look up at the stars, seeing your face between.

What an adorable face it is, Goldilocks!

Some day I am going to kiss you, at my ease and satisfactorily, just where your mouth curls crooked at the left corner. When that day comes, if you are Mrs. Haynes, things will be somewhat complicated, won't they? It will inevitably come—so be warned in time.

I went up to see your mother last night. She told me all about the days of your youth, and your first Christmas tree, when you smashed your doll's head because it wasn't a boy-doll. What an adorable toddler you must have been! Also, how soon dominant traits appear in the young of the human species! Your mother showed me all

your pictures, too, first to last. I took the year-old lady wearing a lace scarf and manipulating a jumping-jack—another prophetic manifestation. Do you get more pleasure from the antics of your Jacks, nowadays, I wonder?

I've been working reasonably hard, lately, and the town is an oven. The staff is more or less crippled by reason of two men sick. I was on the City desk all last week—you're not interested in that, however, are you?

Good night, Goldilocks—the thought of you isn't cooling, and I can't afford to agitate the mercury any further—it's bad enough as it is.

Yours. LARRY.

P. S.—When you marry me, the only thing I regret is that I'll have to leave you every evening from eight to twelve for this beastly paper. Shall you be afraid? Perhaps we'd better board. We can keep house when some one dies and leaves us money.

July 15, '08.

(4)

696 Bloor St.,
Toronto, Canada.

DEAR LARRY: I thought we weren't going to be silly? Of course, it's of no great consequence, only it's horrid to have to be snubbing you all the time. I'll get even with mother for letting you have that dreadful picture. Do you suppose I was ever really such an elfish, wide-eyed infant? It's rather flattering—your suggestion that I'm still pulling the strings to make people jump. And do they jump? The White Rose Man says if I knew how that wistful smile of mine came back to a fellow—"If I knew!" And, like Tommy—isn't it sentimental Tommy you're always quoting—it took me some time to make it so wistful.

It's not nice of you, though, Larry, to make fun of Mr. Haynes. Don't do it again. And don't delude yourself with all that lovely language about my soul. I suppose I have one—but it never bothered me. And, of course, he calls me Cynthia, since it's my name. Why not? You're wasting time, dear boy, in all that romantic foolishness. I

have both fingers in my ears as soon as you begin.

It's lovely and cool here. I hate to think of your being boxed up in that stuffy office writing about murderous Italians. And what do you call being "on the City desk"? It sounds like a sunstroke. Do be careful, Larry. Can't you get a vacation, and go somewhere? There's a cool stretch of green lawn just beneath my window, and a tinkly fountain. I wish I could fold it into this page. Just because I don't want you to talk nonsense, you know, is no reason I'd be glad to hear you'd died of the heat.

I'm going out, to-night, to a supper at the Country Club, and I'm wearing the darlings gown; all white and green, and clinging like seaweed. Isn't the thought of me cool, now? I haven't an empty evening two weeks ahead. Isn't that thrilling? Robert has sent me a lot of new books, but I haven't had time to read them. He's an old dear.

Faithfully,

CYNTHIA.

P. S.—I dare say the girl you marry will be afraid to stay by herself—but she won't be me. And I think you're very impertinent—about where it curls crooked. If I hadn't the sweetest disposition in the world, I'd be awfully angry with you.

You haven't once said you missed me.
July 25, '08. C.

(5)

Times Office,
Camp St., New Orleans.

Haven't I? Not once? Oh, Goosie Goldilocks! To think those wide, blue, wistful eyes of yours should be so blind! I haven't once said I missed you. Do you want me to say it now? What's the use? For you to laugh and sigh and stick the letter away with a ruck of others, and say to yourself: "He's a dear boy, but he is so silly." That is what you'd say—more or less. In my saner moments, I tell myself resolutely that it isn't what you feel. But, my dear, I'm not very sane to-night. It's a black, close, blistering night, with warm, woolly clouds drawn

over all the sky, and not a breath of wind stirring—it's the kind of a night when a man might drown himself, just to get cool. I've finished work—I hadn't much to do, anyhow, a story that didn't pan out—but I think I'd rather stay here and write to you than go up to that stuffy little Hades I call home. It's about midnight, more or less, and one or two of the men are still pounding away on their typewriters. The purple, white glare of these beastly electrics hurts my eyes abominably. Did I tell you I've been having a good deal of trouble with them lately? Nothing of any consequence.

Is the thought of you cool? In your seaweed gown? Goldilocks, if you weren't already vain past possibility, I'd tell you something. I'd give my mortgage on the hereafter to see you in that or any other gown—with your hair in curl papers, if need be—even with your little nose unpowdered—just to see you! That's how much I miss you.

I wonder sometimes if it isn't the part of a fool to care so much for one human being as I do for you. You come between me and my work. I'm ambitious—God knows—but when I think that after all what I do may not be done for you—that the day may never come when you will sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam while I sign checks and fling 'em into your lap—why, things don't look worth while. I'm inclined to throw up the fight. No—not quite that—because the fight is a bigger thing in a man's life than any woman—but it's no fun fighting without some one to look on and clap her little hands if you win—or wipe her little eyes if you lose. Fighting—just fighting—is no fun.

I'm very dull to-night—partly because I'm tired. There's a big campaign on here against the races. A moral wave has swept over the city, and the front doors of all saloons are once more about to be closed on Sundays. The side ones will still open to a friendly knock—week days and Sundays. It's always such a rotten farce—this thing of reform. It only means

that a new gang with a new graft is about to supersede the old one. Still it stirs up a lot of fuss and gets a good many otherwise inconspicuous Solomons into the paper.

Veritas, and Justice, and Citizen are very conspicuous these days. I've been handling the biggest part of the race-track stuff, and working overtime at that. So I see a good deal of the lining of Virtue's cloak. It ravelled easily. I don't mean to bore you with all this shop. It's another world from you and your bread line of suitors, and your lawns with tinkly fountains.

How long before you'll be coming home? This is the twenty-seventh—you'll scarcely stay longer than the end of August. Even so—a month is thirty long days—and when you do come—Haynes will be waiting. What's the answer, Goldilocks? I give it up.

Yours,

LARRY.

Your mother asked me out to dinner Sunday. We had a delightful time, and she showed me your last letter. Why did you ask if I were taking Miss Desmond around much? You know perfectly well, Goldilocks, that you don't care the paring of your least little pink finger nail.

L.

July 27, '08.

(6)

696 Bloor St.,
Toronto.

DEAR BOY: Are your eyes bad, really? Mother wrote me you'd been going to an oculist, but you say it's of no consequence. I'm rather worried, because I'm afraid things are worse than you say. That last letter of yours didn't sound real cheerful. It isn't like you to be humble, Larry. It worries me when you aren't so horribly conceited and sure of yourself—I'm afraid you must be sick. That awful newspaper! I know what it must be on hot nights. Can't you stop a while, if the electrics hurt your eyes? Oh, do be careful! You're such a crazy boy! I can't bear to think that—

I suppose you had the blues or something, didn't you? Answer this letter

as soon as you get it, and tell me the truth.

I want to know just how your eyes really are. I'm having a gorgeous time—more dinners and dances and tea fights than I ever went to before in all my life. My clothes are being used up rapidly. So I may have to come home before the end of August. I can't afford any more. And I can't stay on in rags. The White Rose Man has transferred his affections. He wanted me to marry him, and I wouldn't—how could I, if I'm going to marry Robert? So he stopped coming. But first he told me that some day I'd regret it—that the love of an honest man was nothing to laugh at. I didn't mean to laugh, really, but just as he said—you know what they always say—he stumbled over a chair, and screwed up his face in the funniest way. You'd have laughed, too. I tried to tell him that it wasn't the love of an honest man which amused me—though that can be funny enough, goodness knows!—but he wouldn't listen. He went off distinctly cross, and engaged himself to the champion of the Golf Club. If looks go for anything, she'll beat him. Her good right arm has nothing fragile about it but a bracelet. Anyhow, he was beginning to get bald. I don't care. You and mother are certainly friendly. Did she have trifle for dessert the Sunday you were there to dinner? That's her unfailing mark of affection. I've never been able to make her have it for Robert. She thinks he isn't sufficiently subtle. By the way, he wrote me that he saw you at lunch one day last week, and you looked at him, but didn't speak. I'm ashamed of you, Larry. He explained it on the ground that you were an absent-minded sort of chap, but I know better, and I think it was little of you.

Don't forget you are to write at once, and tell me about your eyes—at once.

And, oh, yes—I never wore curl papers in my life—nor forgot to powder my nose. You are a brute.

Faithfully,
CYNTHIA.

July 31, '08.

(7)
801 St. Charles St.

Your letter only came an hour ago—and this is at once. You are an angel to worry about my eyes. As a matter of fact, they've been pretty bad; that, by the way, is probably the reason I didn't speak to Haynes. I didn't see him. I don't see very clearly, now, across the room. At first, I thought it was only my glasses needing a new lens or something of the sort, but the oculist tells me it's worse than that. I may be going blind. Cheerful prospect. If I'm careful, I may be able to potter around in a sort of semi-twilight for a year or two—if I'm not, and even if I am—I may be in the dark any day. That's the bare truth of it. Of course, it means stopping work. I resigned from the paper yesterday, and am at present living on the lordly income from the old farm you remember my father left me—up in Mississippi. I may be able to get busy again in six months—if a certain operation is successful—or I may not—in six months or any other time.

If this scrawl is a bit scraggy, you'll have to forgive it. I wanted to answer your letter myself—your mother would have told you all this, but I preferred to. I don't want you to imagine I'm whining and cursing Fate, after the fashion of ten-twenty-thirty-cent heroes. It's just that the whole thing is so ghastly sudden. A month ago I had no idea of it. It rather upsets me. I hope you're still having a gorgeous time. Don't stop writing. If my eyes are all to the bad, I'll get some one to read your letters to me.

Faithfully,
LARRY.

Aug. 2, '08.

(8)
696 Bloor Street,
Toronto.

Larry, is it really so bad as that? My dear boy—I have cried my own eyes almost out, to think of it. To think of your having just *that* happen to you—of all horrible things in the world. It doesn't seem possible. The operation will make everything all

right. It's sure to. You've got the best oculist in the city. Mother writes me that he's going to operate on Tuesday. I simply won't believe that the worst can happen. Let me know at once—everything. I'm so unhappy, Larry, and I'm too far away to help—if I were only home! C.

Aug. 6, '08.

(9)
N. O. Sanitarium,
N. O., La.

My DEAR CYNTHIA:

Miss Alden, who is nursing my eyes, is very kindly taking this down. Your note was a great comfort. It was read to me this morning. Don't worry about me—though, it's very nice to feel you do—I'm doing very well, and can't as yet be sure that I have anything to kick about. The operation was performed Tuesday. It will be a week, maybe two, before the doctor can tell just how things are going to turn out. He says the electrics in the office, and a few fool stunts on my own part, are responsible for most of the damage, that it has been coming on a long time. Your mother has been awfully good. She comes down every day or so and reads to me. It's not so warm as it was. At least, my room here is delightfully cool, with a breeze from the river coming in at the window most of the time. I hope you're still enjoying yourself hugely. Write me a jolly long letter, all about people and places—but be careful of your curly y's and crooked n's, because Miss Alden will have to read it to me, and she isn't used to your Sanscrit.

Your mother tells me Haynes has gone to New York. I suppose he'll see you—it's so near. Some people have all the luck!

Well—

Sincerely,
LARRY.

Aug. 14, '08.

(10)
696 Bloor Street,
Toronto.

My DEAR LARRY:

Your letter came this morning. By this time you must have some idea as

to whether the operation was successful or not. Do let me know. I am so anxious. I have been very busy with a lot of things I don't care about, lately. Mrs. Doane had a dinner for me last night. I went in with a visiting lord, or something, from England. He had a wide, soft face, with a good-natured mouth, and he asked a girl here—who told me later on—if I wasn't supposed to be frightfully rich. Wasn't that naive? It's like the shopkeepers, they expect all Americans to be rich on principle. If they only knew that Mrs. Doane was a school chum of mother's, and is giving me, out of the kindness of her heart, an opportunity to make a good match! The White Rose Man was a millionaire. Is it cooler now? Are you halfway comfortable? Don't forget to let me know about your eyes. I can't write any more. I have to go out with Mrs. Doane. I'll look for a letter, even if you can't write it yourself. If I'm stupid to-day, I'm sorry—last night was a dinner dance. Faithfully,

CYNTHIA.

Aug. 18, '08.

(11)

696 Bloor Street,
Toronto.

DEAR LARRY:

I'm afraid your eyes are worse; you haven't written. This is just a line to ask you please to let me know. I can't help worrying. Won't Miss Alden write for you? Faithfully,

CYNTHIA.

Aug. 20, '08.

(12)

696 Bloor Street,
Toronto.

DEAREST:

I don't care how many nurses see this—I'm almost wild with anxiety. Aren't your poor eyes any better? My boy! My dearest, dearest boy! I can't bear the thought of your suffering. I'm coming home. I've broken my engagement with Robert. I wrote him when he was in New York, so he never came on here. He won't care—he's so fat

and good-natured. He'll forget. And if he won't, it doesn't make any difference. It frightens me to think I ever played with you. Suppose you shouldn't want me now! You do—don't you, Larry? Say you do! Say, "We'll see—Goldilocks!" and smile at me. If your eyes are bandaged, smile with your mouth, and I'll come to you. Your letters are only cold because somebody's writing them for you—aren't they? You don't think you ought to ask me, if you're going to be—I can't write the word—but it's all the more reason for your wanting me. We can go up to the farm in Mississippi, and I'll learn to raise chickens, and milk cows—though I'm afraid to death of them. I'll do my own cooking, and yours, too, if it kills us both. Oh, Larry, you've said that you loved me often enough—say it again, so I shan't feel as if I were throwing myself at your head. I've read over your letters, and over and over. They sound as if you meant it. You said I'd come back to you, and I will—I'm so frightened, Larry, and so unhappy, and so very, very far away. I'll wait just long enough for a letter, then I'm coming home, and you'll have to take me—whether you want me or not—because I'm coming to put my head down on your arm, and cry and cry. I want to hear you say, "Goosie Goldilocks" again—and I want to read to you.

Your small girl,
CYNTHIA.

Aug. 22, '08.

(13)

N. O. Sanitarium,
New Orleans.

GOOSIE GOLDLLOCKS:

The doctor says I can write you six lines—no more. The operation was successful. My eyes will be good as new. Come home and cry on my shoulder. I love you, Goldilocks—better than any man ever loved a woman before. We'll be married, and go up to the farm—for six months. Then I'll make money for you. Come home; my arms are just aching. Yours,

LARRY.

That six lines is choked with what I haven't said. I've found the gold at the foot of the rainbow.

Aug. 29, '08.

(14)
Hibernia Building,
N. O., La.

DEAR JANE:

I enclose the letters—you'll see I wrote Larry's last one, to-night. Pretty decent, aren't they? It ought to make a goodish story. Just enough slush to take the Young Person's fancy. I think your Cynthia's a trifle too frivolous, however. Men like Larry don't run of necessity to the kitten-woman kind—but, of course, you don't agree with me. We thrashed all that out the other night. If you ever did agree with me, I bet we'd both be wrong. That's what makes you such an inspiring col-

laborator. Where do you want to send the yarn first? I hope it doesn't occur to any discerning editor that men who are badly in love don't write beautiful letters, as a matter of fact. Maybe Cynthia's are better, after all. They are realistically silly. I don't suppose you've overdone her. Did I tell you I sold the Yucatan story? For seventy-five. If you haven't anything else on, we'll go out to West End for dinner to-night. I'll phone for a table and that crabmeat cocktail you're so crazy about. Send the MS. back to me when you've gone over it, and I'll have it typed. Make any changes you like in Cynthia, but don't touch Larry. Phone me if you can't go to-night—otherwise, I'll be up for you about six-thirty.

Sincerely,
LOUIS.

June 29, '08.



To You

I THINK my life began when we first met;
I have no memories before that day
Of joy or pain—or sorrow or regret—
No one thing I'd remember or forget,
No soul except my own for which to pray.

I never knew until your lips touched mine
God's gift to earth, that He sends from above;
I never knew how bright the sun could shine
Until I heard that tender voice of thine
And understood that life begins with love.

I think my life will end when our two ways
Lead over paths both distant and apart,
For then the memories of other days
Would crowd upon me in an endless haze.
I could not find my way alone, dear heart.

JOSEPH PATTERSON GALTON.



Unheard, Stephen himself had entered the kitchen.

Concerning Comfort

By Grace Margaret Callaher

Author of "The Boy," "At Pettipaug," "From the River's Edge," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

TIME you was a-steppin', Comfort.
Got to have breakfast a mite
early, you know, so as me an'
th' boys can git off to Candlelight Hill."

The voice, although neither loud nor
insistent, climbed up the stairs to the
room with its peaked dormer windows
where Comfort, soft cuddled into the
pillows, was happily engaged with a
little dream.

"Yes, father," the answer, drenched
with sleep, climbed down the stairs in-
stantly.

In the depths of the old four-poster,
Comfort Dickman looked a young crea-
ture, indeed; her small, round face,
flushed from sleep, and bordered by the
nightcap of an elder fashion, that of a
gentle little girl, whose dark eyes
were full of a tender simplicity for all
the world. Permitting herself no fond

loiterings among the dream clouds, she
slipped out of bed, ran to the window,
and gazed out eagerly to test the tem-
per of the new day, that, palely cool and
remote, was spreading its light over
Lyme Hills. She began to dress swift-
ly, with a speed rather of bodily use
in the process than from any quick
spirit within her. As her fingers flew
over button and hook, her lips mur-
mured a sort of screed, "churn, bake,
bresh out spring house," loading, as it
were, her day's pack of tasks.

In the low-raftered old kitchen where
the night shadows still lingered, a
patriarch of a man, bearing himself as
one set in authority, who "ruled acc-
ording to the common weal but not
according to the common will," was
getting down the milk pails. Comfort
fell to preparing breakfast in a flurry

of haste. By the time it was ready, her father and her two brothers, patriarchs in the twig, came in from the barn. The meal was eaten in the swift silence of those who have a hard day's work before them.

David Dickman pushed his chair back first. "If we git 'long with Alfred's barn raisin' as I cal'late to, I'm a-goin' to bring Stephen back to help out on that hill piece t'-morrow. He's 'bout th' best hand to plow in these parts, Stephen Post is." He paused impressively at the door, to dwell on each word as if he were making a point at town meeting. "He's a remark'ble like-ly young man, anyways you take him."

Both the brothers laughed, and Comfort acknowledged the inner significance of this by a little blush.

David opened the door, then closed it on a second thought. "Bein' as you won't have no dinner to cumber you, daughter, you can git a little mite o' somethin' extray done, can't you? I was up attic chamber yesterday after some trade or nuther, an' I see 'twas in a terrible kind o' mess. 'Tain't never been set to rights, as you might say, since Celindy's marryin'. You spread th' goods out on th' shed roof to air, an' give it a real good cleanin' out."

Comfort's mild pink flooded into cruel scarlet, her hands fluttered over the cups. "Father, I dunno as I can make out to get 'round to it," she trembled out. "I got to bake, an' churn, an' bresh out th' spring house, an'—"

Her words crumbled away under the shaft of his unwavering, blue eyes.

"I shouldn't want no such attic chamber to my housekeepin'," he admonished with heavy calm. "You step right 'long smart to th' other things, an' you'll have pretty nigh all day to it." He bent his brows on her as on a willful child, and with no allowance for further pleadings went out to harness.

Comfort sat where he had left her, desparingly intent upon the Rebecca teapot as if the image of that dutiful daughter of an ancient time could fortify her soul. Her thought flickered away to the spring-house meadow,

where the little pointed wild strawberries grew warm in the sun, neighbor'd by the daisies and grasses, and watched over by the high-sailing white clouds.

"I dunno what kind o' worker father thinks I am; a machine, I guess," she cried in so wild a rebellion that she quivered at the impiety of it, and began to heap together the dishes in repentant zeal.

The sun was still swinging close to Lyme Hills, when, the house ordered for the day, and three loaves of brown-crusted bread sending out their good savor from the buttery, Comfort came out on the porch to churn. All her preparations, wholesome and sweet, like everything about her, were made with the unhurried thoroughness that marks the craftsman in love with his task. It was not such big, beautiful achievements, the moulding into shape and substance of cool, yellow butter, that wearied out her days, but the endless persecutions of mop, and broom, and duster. She sank down on the settle by the door, and rested her eyes with the river, deep-dyed of heaven, that whispered fond little secrets to the safe old stones at its marge.

The Dickman farm stepped with uneven paces down into the Connecticut from the end of a wandering lane, and every footprint was gay with flowers, flaming "pinies," particolored sweet Williams, bee larkspur, aspiring rock-ets, all the flaunt and perfume of a long ago Pettipaug garden, even mountain laurel shyly hiding behind the boulders that held back the prowling woods. This "lovesome thing," her garden, framed by "the hill that backed the landscape, fresh and still," and washed by the river, wooed Comfort to come caress it, talk to it in "the little language" it adored. The elm swinging low to the water lured her "to kneel at the river's sliding foot" for gossip. The "wind that tramps the world" whistled her to go a-vagranging with it through pastures aromatic with "the most excellent cordial smell of herbs." The whole wide world was one voice, softly coaxing: "Come play with us, Comfort." The little wood creature below

her outer seeming, the dryad that had stolen the semblance of a Pettipaug maid, pulled her into the open with clinging fingers.

"Oh!" cried the girl in protest against the workaday scheme of things. "Oh!" She ran to the edge of the porch, and jumped lightly into the long grass. Then she ran as quickly back, and, snatching the dasher, churned like some dogged little turnspit. Her thoughts, in a kind of rhythm to the dasher, moved to and fro across the vanished year, not in bitterness, but in wonder at "the changes and chances of this mortal life."

Before that year her sister Celinda, that miracle of "faculty" and service, had been housekeeper; Comfort had fetched and carried for her, helpful, irresponsible. There had been long hours in the still afternoons, or even in the bustling mornings, when she could go gypsying through the "back lots," ostensibly for berries or herbs, but really "on the trail of rapture," or sit under the elm, her hands sewing a long seam, her fancy sailing on the slow trailing river schooners, down to the far-away ocean. The homespun fabric of her days had been pierced through and through with all the gorgeous colors of nature, and a little of "the light that never was on sea or land." Then Celinda had married! Distressed to leave the household upon the slender shoulders of her young sister, she had broken the patience of a lifetime to bespeak care for this new housewife, unwanted to burdens, given a little to moon raking. This pleading had wrought heavily against Comfort. David Dickman, who shirked no duty heavy or light, felt himself charged with the training of a "flighty, headstrong child," for so Celinda's words translated themselves, and with no use in household matters to furnish a standard of limits, dogged her days with watchfulness and admonition. On this reed of a girl rested the care of all the small "critters" of a great farm, all the "fending" for three lusty farmers. He was not a hard driver to his sons, whose "chores" he comprehended; he would not have been

to his daughter, but it needed strong reasoning to touch his certainties, and Comfort was too timid by nature and too dominated by his "counsel of perfection" ever to try.

And this golden day of June, when every little creek of her blood thrilled to the call of beauty, she must delve among musty old chests and stuffy bed-quilts!

The heat of the day was fading toward evening cool, when Comfort stumbled down the "attic chamber" stairs. Her face was scarlet, great drops stood on her forehead and in pools under her eyes, her attitude was of great weariness.

"It's all rid up, that attic chamber," she murmured. "I don't ever want to so much as hear its name. My soul! Folks comin'." She peered out. "It's Aaron and Lindy." Even these visitors could not hurry her to the gate before Celinda was out of the wagon and coming toward her.

"Deacon ain't to home, ain't he?" called Aaron. "Well, he told me I could have his extry harness. You an' Celindy have a dish o' chat while I'm a-routin' it out."

Celinda, a sad-colored woman with kind eyes, greeted Comfort with solicitude. "Why, Cuppie Dickman, whatever you been doin'? You're all beat out. You ain't been traipesin' round in th' back lots in all this heat, have you?"

The two were on the settle now.

"Oh, just churmin', an' bakin', an' cleaning up attic chamber," wanly.

"Child, I should judge you was crazy. Right up under th' roof, this kind o' a day."

"Father said to." It was an all-sufficient reason.

Celinda drew her sister's head down on her bosom. "You poor lamb." Then in a very anger of tenderness: "Father oughtn't to have it so. 'Tain't right conduct."

"I don't see any out to it," breathed Comfort.

Celinda's mild face grooved into long wrinkles. "Poor lamb!" she repeated stroking the damp curls back from



The shouts and running figures swerved the colt from his first plan of leaping the gate.

Comfort's forehead. "I wish 'twas so I could clip it over here from Pettipaug every day; I could do your bakin' an' churnin' an' never know it, so to say."

"I'm all beat out," quivered Comfort, tears creeping down her cheeks.

"I dunno what to do," went on Celinda, in her unemphatic voice. "Father might get a good woman to come live as help." The suggestion was made in the hopeless tone of one who offers a last, well-nigh impossible solution.

Comfort was moved to unselfishness by her sister's trouble.

"Don't you fret you, Lindy, dear." She even laughed a little. "Up attic chamber ain't goin' to be cleaned again this year. You tell me the news down to Pettipaug."

Aaron, a regular Miller o' Dee, interrupted their gossip, calling jovially from the wagon: "Don't look no chunkier than you did last Sabbath, Cuppie. That young fellar o' yours better get a hitch onto you 'fore you blow 'way." He drove out of the yard on the wind

of his own great laughter, Celinda waving an anxious farewell.

"My soul! I'm a mind to give 'em bread an' milk for supper," Comfort sighed, as she began to "rattle up" a fire.

Fried bacon and eggs, hot biscuits, and peach preserves were on the table, however, as the wagon drove to the barn, and Comfort, in a little pink cambric dress with an alluring frill round the neck, drawing tea.

"Hello, Cuppie. Did you know Uncle David cal'lated to bring me back?" A young farmer, carrying himself like a soldier, strode into the kitchen.

Comfort was moved, as always, by his splendid shoulders, filling the doorway, and his pleasant, deep voice, but she answered as cousin to cousin:

"Evenin', Steve; I'm real pleased to have you. You well?"

Stephen Post held her slim hand, unhardened yet by work, between his own broad palms. "You got a proper nice supper for us, I'll wager. I know you're as smart a housekeeper as any to Pettipaug."

Comfort snatched away her hand; did no man think of a woman save in terms of bread and broom?

"Got a piece o' news for you, daughter." David spoke out of the placidity following a good supper. "What say to a purchaser for th' ol' Sessions farm?"

All the men began to smile upon her, and, perceiving some personal application, she jumped to the name nearest her thoughts.

"Tain't Stephen?" wonderingly.

A very gentle look tempered the power of Stephen's face.

"You see, Cuppie, since Alfred's goin' to take unto himself a wife, didn't seem as if th' ol' farm was big 'nough for two such great, husky fellows like we are, so I sold him my half, took th' money Grandther Champion left me outer bank, an' your father an' me finished up th' deal with ol' man Sessions' heirs to-day. Think you can stand me for neighbor?" He bent across the table as he asked the question and, to her sympathy, a queer throb beat in his voice.

"But there ain't any house on it. How you goin' to live?"

"I cal'late I can let Steve sleep up east chamber till he builds his own house, if he behaves himself." David pronounced his small joke with the pleasure of a serious man who chooses to sport for once.

"Think you're able to do for 'nother great dunderin' man, Cuppie? I guess a comp'tent worker like you are won't make much stew over that." Again that new tone in Stephen's slow voice.

Comfort's eyes, unwilling, rested on him. How like her father he was; though only a distant cousin. Why had she never noticed before the resemblance in hard jaw, and stern mouth? An ugly thought crept over her like a miasma from a swamp. Another man to bake and wash and mend for! She felt choked by foul air, her bread was bitter in her mouth.

"Ain't you goin' to offer Stephen no kind o' welcome?" concluded her father, still in high humor.

She could not meet his eyes, her

voice came through stiff lips, sullen and hoarse to herself, yet collected.

"There ain't anybody could be more like our own folks than you, Steve, an' I'spose this house's consid'ble like home to you." Without waiting for his answer, she rose to get a drink from the pitcher on the dresser.

The brothers and Stephen went out to the barn, and David seated himself by the table with the county paper. Like a wave of dizziness that flows over the victim in a dark whirl and then recedes, leaving calm behind, the sordid misery of overwork dropped away from Comfort, and left her again to sanity and sweetness. To have Stephen with her, not on a rare holiday snatched from Candlelight Hill, but every day in all the dear, intimate relations of home, and to let that exquisite pleasure be blighted by this petty coil of ways and means! This knot of man's contriving, her fiends, no child's, but a woman's, would untie—or cut. "A waft word" of Celinda's fluttered in her brain, "a good woman to come help." She thrust the dish she was wiping onto the shelf, walked with a swift step across the room, and stood, her hands clasped behind her, to hide their trembling, in front of her father.

"Father."

"What say, Cuppie?" not looking up from the *New Era*.

The child name, unfamiliar on his lips, encouraged her.

"I want to talk to you 'bout somethin'."

David regarded her now; her beseeching eyes, her culprit attitude, even her little pink cambric, suggestive of a child's "tyer," wrought in him memories of earlier bars of judgment.

"What you been doin' you hadn't oughter?" he asked severely.

"Twas an ill-omened start. Comfort strove for composure and achieved bravado.

"It's th' work. I can't do it. It's too hard. One woman can't do it. I don't have time for anythin'. I keep drudgin' 'way every minute." She stopped, breathless.

David held the shaft of his gaze, fast

hardening from wonder into ire, strong upon her; his lips were a thin line. Comfort's words were torn from her brokenly, as if they were bits of iron and her father's grim silence a magnet.

"I can't go any place, to Pettipaug, or to see th' girls. I don't do anythin' but just work. It's more'n one pair hands ought to try. I can't do it! I can't!"

At last David spoke.

"What set you off on this tune today?"

To the unexpected question, she flung back in random excitement: "Twas th' attic chamber, an' then Steve, his comin' to make one more to—"

"What you want I should do 'bout it?"

"Lindy said"—No, she would not hide behind her sister's skirts. "I thought—if you could get some good, cap'ble woman to come live—"

"Where'd I get her?" still with dry calm.

She delved hurriedly for a definite name to meet his practicality.

"I can't think o' anybody 'special, just now, father," she trembled out, "but there's a place over to Middletown, an agency, I think's th' name o' it, where you can get 'em soon as ever you send for 'em."

David's calm broke in pounding words, "Agency over to Middletown! You'd fetch into our good home a shiftless type o' a woman from some Tollux tribe or 'ruther to baum up th' hull house with her no 'count ways, an', like 'nough, throw your great grandmarm's sprigged chinny to th' pigs? Or, maybe, you're lookin' to have one o' them fur-riners with brass hoops to their ears that'd pisen our victuals or cut all our throats in th' night?" The cold light in his blue eyes seemed to count that her real reason for desiring "help."

"What I goin' to do, father? I can't do it alone any more. I can't! No! No! I can't!" Comfort's voice rose into a shriek. She beat on the table with her hands, the fingers widely spread. It was the excited flare-up of a sensitive, tired girl, and as such no matter for

judgment; but David, wonted from boyhood to women self-contained, meek, saw in it th' "shaller" complainings of a frivolous child at war with her wholesome duty. More than ever, pictures of this strange little daughter in "a tantrum" rose out of the years and blurred his present sight.

"Do?" he repeated solemnly in his favorite prayer-meeting phrase. "Your duty in your proper lot an' place so far forth as it has pleased Providence to show it unto you." Then harking back to her first words: "You deem it's goin' to be consid'ble more o' a task to have Steve live 'long here a spell? Israel in Egypt! I should think I was fixin' to bring th' hull o' Pettipaug in onto you, th' way you're a carryin' on! You ain't much patterned arter your mother, she couldn't do 'nough for them she prized." Swinging suddenly upon her: "You do prize Steve, don't you?"

In this sharp counter upon her, the last thin barrier of control melted away from the harassed girl. "I don't prize Stephen Post," she cried in a fierce re-pudiation, "I don't want he should live here. I wish he'd go back to—"

The furious command of her father's face silenced her. Unheard, Stephen himself had entered the kitchen, and stood beside her, bringing with him the coolness of dew and stars. The girl, catching at her skirts like one in a gale, without glance or word, fled up the stairs to her own room.

There on the floor by the open window she sobbed till all her strength for emotion was spent; then, listless, watched the gray mist crawl up from the river and harkened to the lonesome whippoorwill in the pasture. The shame of the recruit who flees his first stricken field, terror of her father, the burden of the heavy days, these all consumed her with slow heat, but the anguish of a darting flame was in the memory that in one rush of frenzy she had shattered her priceless treasure. Why, she'd work her fingers to the bare bones for a friend like Steve; and even as she said the word "friend" with shaking lips the fashion of a mightier

word, difficult on her New England tongue, formed itself within her soul, revealing old wealth of happiness and present bankruptcy.

The family were all out of sorts at breakfast, or so it seemed to Comfort's sick mind, except Stephen, who was his usual soberly pleasant self, as kindly in cousinship as if those terrible words had not been.

"It wasn't any kind o' a blow to him," she told herself drearily, "he just don't care."

"I've got to drive down to Pettipaug to see Lot Shailer 'bout a cow," David announced. "I'll take th' colt, for you boys'll need th' team to plow. You fly 'round so's you'll be ready to go long, too, Comfort, so's you can holt him whilst I hunt up Lot. Colt don't like to be hitched."

A few minutes later, Comfort, in the pink cambric and a white leghorn tied under her chin, had mounted into the democrat, while her father, holding the reins from the ground, was still in consultation with Stephen.

"Better get th' new lines, father," called her Brother Jerry from the barn, "them old one's turr'ble weak."

As if his words had set in motion destiny, the colt plunged forward in some irrational fear, the "turr'ble weak" line parted in David's hand, and horse and wagon dashed on toward the yard gate.

"Set down, Cuppie!" "Whoa!" "Holt on!" The shouts and running figures swerved the colt from his first plan of leaping the gate; he swung sharply around, and hurled the cumbersome wagon from him. Comfort spun in the air, struck the hard trodden door yard with violence, and lost count of time and place.

Only a minute's blackness closed over her, for when she opened her eyes the boys were just gentling the colt, and Stephen was running toward her with a basin of water.

"There ain't no bones broke as I can make out," her father's voice said behind her. She knew it must be he that held her.

"You feelin' some better, Cuppie?"

She struggled to answer, but could not, for great numbness.

They carried her into the "foreroom chamber," and there the doctor, Celinda, and Aunt Katie Burritt, village nurse, came to heal her. The doctor, an eager-faced boy, deeply learned from the schools, deeply ignorant of all mankind, pronounced the hurt a shock to the spine, or the brain, which might last—ah—days—or—ah—even weeks; care, watchfulness, and ah—yes, freedom from all disturbance were the only remedies—ah—possible.

Two strange, dim days, in which sleeping and waking were all in a tangle, Comfort lay in the foreroom chamber, numb and speechless. The third, she woke to the familiar clank of the well sweep drawing water for the cattle's noon drink. Her body was quick again, her tongue tipped with speech, but a lotos-eating idleness enchanted her; she wished never again to stir from that fastidiously neat chamber with its cool north light and its window that framed a picture of blue river and green hill. She lay, placidly happy, resting with every nerve of her body, till steps sounded.

"Lindy? Aunt Katie? You there?"

Neither Celinda's serious person nor Aunt Katie, nimble as a cricket, answered, but a very Amazon of a woman, with a thumping stride and a face of pure good will.

"Th' ol' Farrago! Cat ain't got your tongue no longer, has it?" in a cheering shout.

Comfort smiled. She would have laughed if she had felt such relaxation suitable for an invalid. "How you get here, Mary?"

Mary from the Mill thuddled herself into a rocker. "Laws, how het up I be! If this ain't th' beatenmost house for work, I don't know none. Well, Aaron's folks over to Cuttle Harbor, they 'lected to visit him right now, th' hull passel o' em, so Celindy she had to chip it home, an' Aunt Katie she went off in a wheu to ol' Mis' Joyce, wh'e fell down sullar an's a sight worse off 'en you be. Deacon he come over to th' mill prayin' an' be-



There, between her and the moon, large and ominous, was Stephen, fully dressed in his workaday clothes.

seechin' me to step into the gap. I ain't no nuss, an' never was, nor no house-keeper nuther, but land, 'tain't nothin' to 'minister to you, an' I kind o' claw together three meals a day for th' men."

An elfish light crinkled into Comfort's soft eyes. "What I do to me that day?" she asked with proper solemnity.

"Oh, nothin' to fret over," answered Mary easily, "jest a sort o' whang you give you in th' back. Doctor says you rest you up good, an' 'twill all come right. He 'lowed you was all run down, or it wouldn't have gone so hard with you."

"Does father know?" following her own thought.

Mary stared. "Know? Forever, Cuppie! Your pa's in a reg'lar stew 'bout you; acts though you was a piece o' chiny that's got all broke to pieces. There he comes, now. You want you should see him?" Without waiting, Mary strode out, calling in her invigorating shout: "She's come to, Deacon Dickman, an' askin' for you."

Comfort let the laughter bubble up. "Poor father, he can't abide folks that ain't just so quiet!"

David kissed his daughter with care-

ful affection, as if she might indeed break.

"You tol'ble peart again, Cuppie?"

Once more that *Puck* crinkle behind her eyes. "I don't feel to move, fatter," she said demurely.

"No, no, couldn't expect that yet a while, daughter; you give you a turrible blow."

"How's Mary gettin' on for you?"

David's resolute tranquillity shook. "Great gormin' critter! Should think 'twas old Tobet hazin' 'round in th' kitchen! An' her bread's yaller'n saffron!" Then called back to the doctor's counsels: "But we ain't sufferin', none, don't you feel a mite roused up 'bout us. You jest put your hull vim to gettin' smart again."

If David had not been intent on the river picture, he would surely have thought a mischief-loving changeling in the bed of his gentle, obedient little girl, but her "I will" was the very invalid tone.

Her eyes asked a question he could not read, so Comfort gained no word of Stephen.

It was a happy fortnight, full of day-dreams, flowers, and the events of river and mill as they crossed her window, like figures in a magic-lantern slide. Comfort soaked in rest with every pore, and blossomed out into all the little allurements and gayeties the hard year had forbidden her to wear. Some freakish sprite of wood or stream, kin-folk of a long-gone time, had stolen into this dutiful daughter of Pettipaug, and it was less than nothing to her that "the round earth and they that dwell therein" swung on its way without her. She planned no logical ending to this strange illness, she drifted without rudder or port on a current of sheer content.

She was so unexacting a patient, so safe in her bed that Mary from the Mill left her long periods while she "fiddled 'round th' kitchen," a bass viol her instrument from the sound, or even "rastled with th' critters out to th' barn." Then it was that Comfort, to ease the stir of her young blood, skipped about the room, peered out

into the hall, or refreshed herself in the rocker.

One night, soon after the foreroom gran'ther clock had boomed out midnight, she woke with a little jump that lifted her out of bed onto the floor before she knew it.

"My soul," she whispered, rubbing the sleep from her eyes, "it's proper pleasant to feel my feet 'gain." She danced, quick and soft, in a patch of moonlight. "I wonder—" She leaned out into the garden dripping with moonlight.

The foreroom chamber was in a wing separate from the rest of the house, the family might have been in another dwelling; as for Mary, her sleep was audible from the room above. Comfort laughed with inward mirth, took a noticing look about, and dropped lightly out the window into a bed of gilly flowers.

"I didn't hurt you, my pretties, did I?" she whispered to a tall stalk as she straightened it up. "Oh, my, ain't it sweet here!"

She pattered through the dewy grass, bending now to pluck and crush in her hand sprig of spicy lemon verbena or leaf of pungent tansy. Nothing stirred the night silence save the river whispering, always whispering. "Oh!" She stretched her arms to the misty stars, dimmed in the moon's splendor. The ecstasy of the night was upon her. "Wish I had shoes, I'd go down to th' river. I know how I'll plan it to-morrow night!" She clapped her hands noiselessly, her face now all elfin. She moved through the garden toward the well. The old watchdog pulled at his chain, and snapped out a sharp bark, but her whispered "Ponto, quiet!" silenced him.

"Can't anybody see me this side o' th' house," she soothed herself, "cept Steve." A glance up at her cousin's window showed a dark, still room. But Stephen's name had marred the witchery of the night, a cold wind made her shiver, weakness drooped her body. "He ain't so much as looked in th' door since I was hurt," she brooded, turning back without another glance at the

wonder world. "I ain't surprised, 'tain't lik'ly he ever cared, an' now he must be as good as set against me."

She pulled herself through the low window easily, washed her feet clean of dust and the floor of footprints, and curled into the warm bed. Her face looked humanly sad again. "He was just a cousin always," was her last thought.

The next night she awoke at the same hour, as if a hand had touched her. She crept to the foreroom-chamber closet, where, in a bundle stored away for the tin peddler, was a dress of her own and a worn pair of her cloth slippers. "If I can go trapesin' 'round where I'm a mind to, night times, I guess I can make out to endure bein' bedrid o' days," she told herself gaily, as she stole through the grass toward the river. She knelt by it, bathing her face in its cool water. "Ain't that pleasant! I wisht I could see how my wild garden was a-comin' on." At the thought she fluttered up the bank toward the wood. It had been her fancy that spring to sow handfuls of seed, poppies, pansies, rockets, all the dooryard flowers among the mosses of the wood that on the river side pressed in upon the homestead.

"They're a-bloomin'," she cried in hushed delight, and sank down upon her knees behind the rampart of laurel, to get near to them.

She heard no sound, saw no shadow; yet something moved her to turn her head toward the house. There, between her and the moon, large and ominous, was Stephen, fully dressed in his workaday clothes. His look, whose keen, far-reaching quality she well knew, was full upon her hiding place, his head was poised to listen. Should she run out upon him and beg his comradeship in her secret? She minded herself of his hard likeness to her father. Besides, he no longer cared. She flattened herself on the ground, breathing quick and small, and waited, tense with fear, his next movement. Slowly, questioningly, he turned back to the house, stopping, listening. Comfort waited, straining her ears till the mus-

cles of her head ached, to learn which way he had gone.

"He couldn't see," she cheered herself, "my dress's so dark; he just thought 'twas somethin' movin' in th' wind."

After long waiting, she found courage to crawl out, not by the open moonlit path she had come by, but through the shadows of the laurel and fern. A wind had sprung up, rattling the lilac bushes against the house, and swaying the old elm in creaking groans, loud enough to drown the scrape of bushes against her body. No one stirred in the house, and in Stephen's room all was dark and quiet.

"My country!" she gasped, when she was safe again in her room. "I wonder if there's a whole thread to me?" lifting up her dress, from which bush and rock had taken toll. "An' I've lost one shoe, but so long's my nightgown ain't tore, who cares? What do you cal'late fetched Steve out o' bed this night? Oh, dear!" It was the sigh his name always drew from her.

The Dickman farm was so remote from main-traveled roads that visitors were few, even in time of sickness. The next morning, however, Comfort's aunt, Mis' Parinthia Tuttle, from Pond Meadow, appeared with her youngest son. Having deposited the son, still uncertain on his feet, with Mary, she drove on to Pettipaug "to do some tradin'" before condoling with the invalid. The day was hot, and the doctor, always wise with "shock to the spine" in face of Comfort's steady "I don't feel to move," had ordered her to be carried to a cot set up on the porch. Mary from the Mill arranged her cozily there, in a quaint little "double gown" of faded blue roses in a faded pink garden.

"You want you should keep an eye on this little tad a spell?" Mary suggested, thumping young Samuel Tuttle onto the porch floor. "I'll hitch a string round his leg an' you can hol' th' end. I got to haze 'round out to th' barn for eggs, an' if I was to try to navigate them eggs an' this young one th' same time, one or nuther o' 'em would come to confusion."



She leaped, a thing of wings, across the porch, flew, hands outstretched, hair fluttering, to the rock, and swept the baby into her arms.

The infant Samuel played complacently on the porch till the arrival of the turkey "garbler" in the dooryard. This formidable creature instead of alarming the house of Tuttle entranced it. Quick as a dropped ball, he rolled to the ground, carrying the string from Comfort's idle grasp; and set off at a waddling canter toward his desire. Comfort laughed at the droll sight. The next moment she caught at the end of the cord, missed it, and called despairingly: "Baby, come back! Come back to Cuppie, dearie." Comedy had flowed swiftly into tragedy. As fast as his fat legs could carry him, he was nearing the rock that on its side went sheer down into the river. One wavering plunge after Jock, who evaded disdainfully, and he was down. On the rock! No, over it! No, a bush caught his skirts for an instant's stay. Comfort saw her father and Stephen coming from the barn, too far to help, saw the river running in swift current past the rock. She leaped, a thing of wings, across the porch, flew, hands outstretched, hair fluttering, to the rock, and swept the baby into her arms.

She turned to meet the rush of Stephen's speed to her, and the slower run of her father. David gathered her up carefully, his face pale and agitated.

"A'mighty, Cuppie!" he shuddered out as he carried her to the cot. "You lie right where you be, while I go straight for doctor." He drew the quilt tenderly about her. "Doctor, he said 'twas a great shock had laid you low, an' it might take just such 'nother to set you goin' again, but I never counted on witnessin' no such miracle as this."

He caught the baby away from Stephen, who had picked up that cheerful person as his share of the rescue, and hurried away for Mary and the doctor.

"Father," called Comfort in piteous wildness, "Father, you wait!"

But David was gone. Well, her problem was solved, her powers restored, and all without harm to her reputation. A miracle he had called it—amen, so let it be! Slowly her gaze was drawn up to Stephen, standing tall and silent at the foot of the cot, a looming figure. She had not looked in his face now for

many days, and she was terribly moved by the sadness she found in his eyes. The kindness of their soft gray depths was far other than the hard surface brightness of her father's. She would not trick Steve! He didn't prize her any longer, but he should judge her an honest girl, though the telling killed her. She cast off her wrappings and stood before him, a small and straight figure in the narrow "double gown," but a valiant one.

"There ain't no miracle to it, Steve," she cried. "I could walk as well as anybody if I'd been a mind to."

"Didn't you never hurt you, Comfort? Was it all just a cat trick?"

"Oh, I did, I did," wincing miserably. "Those first two days I was just all over numbness; I couldn't a-moved if th' bed had a-burnt up, but th' rest o' it was—just—what you said."

The man grasped the porch pillar with a grip that turned his knuckles white; his voice shook as much as hers.

"What you run such a rig on us for?"

Comfort's face crimsoned with abasement, tears burned in her eyes, but she held her look to his bravely. "I'm shamed to tell you, it sounds so shiftless an' paltry. But I was all beat out. Th' work was pretty nigh killin' to me, Steve, an' father wouldn't give me any helper nor any rest—so—I just took it."

"My God!" Amazement now for the first time charged his face, and a strange look of release from pain. "An' I thought all 'long 'twas you couldn't a-bear th' sight o' me, an' took to your bed to keep clear o' me!"

Now amazement was Comfort's part. "You thought all 'long?" she breathed, her lips parted to the words.

Stephen's smile moved her to trembling as he drew from his pocket, and tenderly unwrapped from the white paper covering as of a great treasure, a worn-out little cloth shoe.

"Miss it any?" still smiling.

"Then you did see me!"

"Well, I ain't slept just right since I come here, an' night afore last I 'lowed

I heard ol' Pont bark, so I looked out my window. I wasn't anywise clear o' it, but I deemed I see a somebody movin' round this house, but 'fore I could do anythin' one way or n'other 'twas gone. Nothin's gained by talk, so I kep' shut 'bout it, but last night I set a watch. I see it plainer this time, a woman, an' a little one at that, an' I trailed her round th' garden down to th' river. There I lost her somehow, an' I started huntin' gain. All of a sudden, I don't know how 'twas, but I was Bible certain that woman was you. I didn't stop to see if you was demented or what had took you, I just lit out for bed. This mornin' it looked 'bout th' foolist notion that a sick girl like you could antic 'round nights, so I followed them footprints to see whose they really was. They fetched me spang onto this!" He stroked the little shoe gently. His smile grew quizzical. "Minds me o' that chap in the story we read when we was little tads, 'member?"

Comfort's eyes, soft and appealing always, were limpid now, her cheeks were like roses, her voice was tremulous, for his smile and his tone were telling her a story older even than that of Cinderella and her prince. A dread shot athwart her joy.

"Oh, Steve, how we ever goin' to tell father?"

At the unconscious pronoun, his smile was movingly tender again.

"What you got to tell for?"

"Oh," she trembled out, "'twouldn't be right to get th' better o' father so!"

"How you figger out you was goin' to square it with him when you kited down that bank arter young Hopeful?"

"I didn't think, I just ran," simply.

"I'll be bound you didn't, nor never do so long as there's a somethin' you can do for somebody. You listen to me, Cuppie, an' you mind me, too." He laid a hand on her shoulder; his height and strength, his voice, all the manhood of him dominated her. "Don't you never let on this warn't a genuine, fire-proof mir'cle. Uncle David Dickman's been havin' th' upper hand over every last mother's son he ever come cross

since he could circulate 'round his own dooryard, an' 'twill do him a sight o' good, even if he don't ever know it, to get his comeupens for once!"

Complete trust looked from her eyes. "If you think it's so, it won't be wrong, Steve."

"There's consid'ble few things I should kind o' take pleasure in tellin' him, though, if 'twas so I could, an' one o' them's that if I owned a little high-spirited, blood filly I wouldn't yoke her up to a plow to drudge like a farm horse!" He clinched his hand over the little shoe in a passion terrifying in a man of so quiet a habit.

"I'd work my fingers to th' bone for you, Steve," she thrilled back, to his emotion.

He pressed the shoe against his heart in an unconscious gesture. "What you mean that night you told him you wished I was back to Candlelight Hill again?"

Before she could give him even a glance in answer, he had caught her into his arms, holding her in a strong clasp, his cheek against her soft hair. "I don't care what you meant," he

breathed in a voice rough with the beat of his heart in it. "I don't care what you mean now. I got Nate Bird over th' other side o' my farm to rent me half o' his house till I can get my own built, an' Mis' Bird she's willin' to help out with th' work. I'm goin' to have you for my own, you little dearie, an' carry you 'way from this place that's grindin' your life out afore my eyes! Oh, I'll be good to you, you poor pretty little creetur, you. I don't care anythin' 'bout th' farm nor th' house nor like that, th' way I care 'bout havin' you happy."

Misunderstanding and explanation were by no means necessary in this clear-lighted land of love. Comfort drew her arms free that she might slip them around his neck, and whisper to him, so low even he could hardly hear, some of the sayings of "that land of heart's desire." Yet because this hour was too poignantly beautiful, too piercing sweet, she fluttered out a bubble of laughter in a voice trembling with love. "If you do—carry me 'way, Steve, dear, ain't you feared I'll play some 'cat trick' on you?"



Mistletoe

IN May I sent you violets
For you to wear, dear;
And in your hair you placed a few,
And fairer grew their faëry blue
When they were there, dear.

A rose of red I gave you then—
It grew but for it;
Again you placed it in your hair,
And lo, its crimson deepened there
Because you wore it.

And now I bring you mistletoe,
A lover's token;
Ah, take the modest spray and weave
It in your yellow hair—and leave
The charm unbroken.

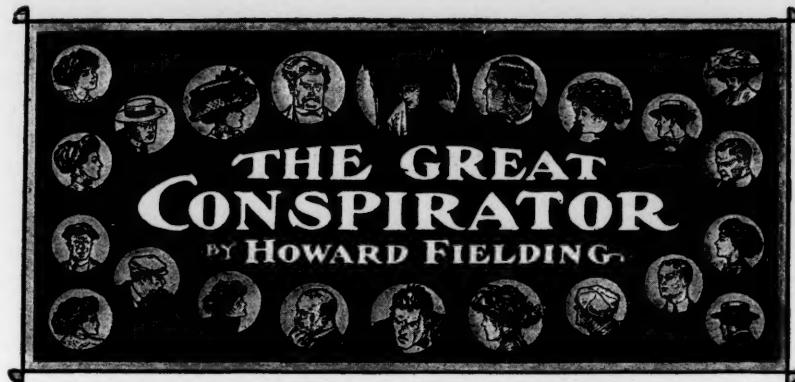
—WILLIAM F. McCORMACK.

The Great Conspirator

By Howard Fielding

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

MRS. FRANCES SEABURY, a woman of enormous wealth, who has sunk every other feeling in her financiering, lives with her two nephews, Jack Deering and Arthur Seabury, and a daughter of an old friend, Sylvia Leland. These are to inherit her money, but are kept on a meagre allowance owing to the parsimony of Mrs. Seabury, with whom relations are constantly strained. Mrs. Seabury's secretary, a young lady named Alice Warden, becomes close friends with the other young people, and Deering falls in love with her. Arthur Seabury and Deering speculate against the expressed wish of their aunt, get on the wrong side of the market, and are on the edge of a failure which will necessarily come to the attention of Mrs. Seabury. At this juncture, the four go to Cape May to spend the summer. On the night of their arrival the hotel flagstaff is struck by lightning. At the moment of uproar, Alice Warden, who had gone into Mrs. Seabury's room by mistake, is shot in the throat, so that she cannot speak, and dies, after making an unintelligible attempt to write the murderer's name. Jack's revolver, of peculiar pattern, is found to be missing; and Dalton, a servant, who had professed his affection for Alice, also disappears. During the excitement Mrs. Seabury's attorney comes to report the loss of a quantity of securities entrusted to him. No trace of the murderer is found, and Mrs. Seabury assumes the responsibility of directing the suspicion away from her three charges who were the only persons near the scene at the moment. The chief of police, Quinn, arrives and starts his investigations. Sylvia is detected concealing a key which she finds in the room where the murder was committed. Deering produces the bullet—which does not fit his missing revolver. Mrs. Seabury discusses the bribing of the coroner and tells him that Ethel Lockwood, a former fiancée of Dr. Clinton, in whom Arthur has taken an interest, was the woman on the lower veranda. Deering and Seabury meet Lynde on their way to Clinton's office. He poses as a newspaper correspondent, but, as they find out later from another reporter, is really a tool of Mrs. Seabury's. He tells of the story he has sent to the papers implicating Miss Lockwood. At Clinton's office they find chief of police Quinn waiting. He tells Arthur that a man, answering the description of the missing Dalton, sent an express package to Marjorie Vannard at Philadelphia. After Quinn's departure, Dr. Clinton arrives and declares that Miss Lockwood can give an alibi. Seabury goes out to get Jack Deering, and Clinton slips away. Deering and Seabury return to the hotel, where they find in the earth at the end of the veranda the prints of a woman's shoes, which have been partly obliterated by those of another woman. In addition, there are marks of two men's shoes. They go to Bud Burke, one of the hotel servants, to find out what he knows. He claims to be able to identify the woman who was on the veranda. After Deering promises him a thousand dollars, he points out a young lady on the hotel porch, who, he says, is named Marjorie Vannard. A few moments later she disappears. Arthur becomes convinced that Jack and Sylvia are keeping something from him, but they stoutly deny it. He delivers a message from Lynde to his aunt asking for an interview at three o'clock, which she declines. Sylvia and Jack tell him that this is only a notification of an appointed hour, and the three await developments. The meeting at three o'clock turns out to be an informal examination by the coroner, who, secretly acting for Mrs. Seabury, succeeds in making Dr. Clinton tell conflicting stories. Clinton is apparently trying to shield Edith Lockwood; and Deering, seeing that his aunt wishes to get Clinton in her power, provides a loop-hole for his escape. Arthur goes to see Edith, and learns that while he supposed himself to be asleep, she saw him on the veranda, close to Alice's window, at the time the shot was fired. It suddenly occurs to him that he is the one they are all trying to shield.



ILLUSTRATED BY F. X. CHAMBERLIN

CHAPTER XVI.

A MAN of my complexion and apparent ancestry should be at his best when fate is most unjust to him. He is a non-conformist, opposed to the universal order, constantly at war with the law of cause and effect. Nature is to him an unnatural mother; there is no love between them; she will presently put him out of doors altogether, and give his bed and porringer to his darker brother. He has befooled himself with various doctrines, and still continues in that folly, yet with a dim perception of the unchangeable truth which is that the trouble in the family is radical, irremediable, a question of basic moral conviction. He cannot do right and keep his eye upon results, for this to him is sin; he cannot live in Mother Nature's house unless he so conducts himself, for she will not permit it. Wherefore he must go forth and perish; and the discerning already see him on the threshold.

Every consequence is natural. The death of Alice by my hand flowed from my acts in the unbroken sequence of events. Judged in the crude and usual way, it was the result of that dishonest speculative venture upon which I had embarked with Jack. By that I had disorganized the structure of my being, as a drunkard with liquor; and

in the state which had been thus induced, I had blindly slain my friend. Perfectly natural. The item stood upon the books of the universe balanced to a nicety. The law of the conservation of energy was sublimely satisfied. All the force expended in my conduct had been accurately accounted for by an infinitely perfect and equal reaction. Examine for yourself, Mr. Seabury; here is the page:

"Nature, in account with Arthur Seabury, murderer." Can you discover any error here? And you will find Miss Warden's page kept with the same care. Upon the one side is the item that she wore a black gown; again, that she went to that room in the dusk; that she heard you by the window, and arose from her chair, and took some steps in your direction. Such are the charges, and the balancing credit is death; she paid in full.

My only answer is that I am ashamed of the sky over my head, and of the ground under my feet; ashamed of every particle of sentience whereby I come in contact with the universe. I make no claim of innocence; I admit my guilt, but I protest against this monstrous and inequitable punishment. Punishment? That depends upon yourself. Discharge regret from your mind; preserve a discreet silence; be wary, shrewd; take a leaf from Mrs. Seabury's book, and be quick about it.

Exert your influence with those who might harm you now, and they will shield you instead. Edith, upon one side of her character, is a child; upon the other side, she is a creature stored with extraordinary energies, capable of any extremity of conduct at the call of an emotion. She is your friend, and you have just done her a service. Appeal to her to keep your secret, and you will see where the weakness really is. You will find that a single eyelash of hers is stronger in the arts of deception than twenty men.

Sylvia loves you. What did she do when you touched with your blood-stained hand the dress that Alice was to wear in her grave? She shrank for one instant, and then laid her face upon your hand and washed it with her tears. You saw that, and you did not understand. You may depend also upon Jack. He is inclined to be the sort of man whom I, Nature, despise—full of heart and loyalty, unselfish, sacrificing his own interests to another's, and thus always in danger; yet for that very reason he is one who can be used. And Mrs. Seabury, whom I admire and have loaded with my favors, will protect you; and she is more powerful than all your enemies combined. You talk of punishment. Only weakness and folly are punished. Be wise, and you will suffer nothing from that girl's death. She would have been of no use to you, if she had lived.

Thus came the counsel from the cold inwards of creation, clever, calculating words to save me from a prison and the loss of love and of all brightness and pleasure out of my life; but I was in no mood to listen. I had been ill used, and that hostility to Nature, which is the ultimate spring of good in persons of my blood, had been sharply wakened. I was fully determined to declare the truth openly, and to face the consequences with no compliance, no moral tolerance; merely with a stubborn courage. But first I must keep my word to Sylvia, who had bound me in honor that I would come to her.

With this intent, and with a sad heart for Sylvia, I was upon my way

to the Eglinton, when a voice hailed me. I saw that pleasant-faced young man, the correspondent of the *Recorder*, who had disclosed Lynde's occupation to Jack and me.

"I say, Mr. Seabury," he called, for I had already rushed past him, "could you give me half a minute? It's about something you might like to know."

There was nothing more that I needed to know, but I liked this man, and so I halted.

"I've just seen Quinn," said he. "It was in my power to do him a small favor, and he gave me a tip in return. He's not saying much about it yet, I fancy, but he didn't swear me to keep dark."

"What is it?" I asked, without interest.

He let some strangers pass us before he answered.

"Quinn tells me that he has located the girl—the one that was on the lower veranda. He didn't give me the name, but I'm to meet him later. It's not Miss Lockwood, however; he gave me his word for that, flat and cold."

Now indeed I was stirred from my indifference.

"You have no idea who it is?" I asked.

"Not the least in the world," said he. "Not a guess, even. Have you?"

I replied falsely: "No."

"The best line on it that I've got," said the reporter, "is Quinn's source of information. I believe I know who his witness is, but the fellow himself won't admit it; and he's a hard man to deal with, whether to trick or to coerce. I guess you know the man—Bud Burke."

"I am aware of his existence," I replied.

"If I'm not mistaken, Quinn had Burke in his torture chamber this afternoon, and put him through the thirty-third degree. Bud admits that he talked with Quinn, but from the way he tells the story you'd think that it was a condemnation on his part, and that Quinn received him kneeling, with an offering of beer and pretzels. 'I was sorry that I couldn't oblige him,' said Bud.

'I know a good bit about what's going on, but not about this. Nobody regrets it more than I do,' he added, with a solemn grin; 'for it smells like money.'

"He has already told me this," said I. "Mr. Deering and I have questioned him, without result."

"I advise you to try him again," said he. "And I'll tell you what I'll do, Mr. Seabury: I'll go in with you on this, and we'll split the expense. I've wired to see what my paper will stand, and when I've got an answer, I'll come over to the Eglinton and tell you. This isn't very nice work, but it has to be done in these days. Stop bribery now, and you'd stop the whole commercial and professional machinery so blasted sudden that it would all fly off the earth. And a blamed good riddance, too, for the most of it! But that's not our affair just now. I'll see you later."

There could be no doubt as to the meaning of Quinn's statement; Burke had named Miss Vannard, doubtless under some form of compulsion. Whether he was mistaken or had been bribed to do this, I could not decide, nor could I foresee the result of it. Quinn would surely question Miss Vannard immediately, and she might be subjected to considerable annoyance, unless she could satisfy him that Burke's story was a myth. In regard to her ability to do this I was not confident, for Jack had given me the impression that Miss Vannard must depend upon her own word alone.

My memory of our agreement with Burke was not precise, but I had no doubt that his act had freed us from our pledge of silence, at least to the extent that I might honorably warn Miss Vannard; and it seemed no more than fair that I should do so. The matter had ceased to have importance, now that the mystery's end would come so soon, with my confession, and Miss Vannard might as well be spared Quinn's questioning.

I went to the Donaldson, and asked to have my card sent to Miss Vannard. The clerk looked at me in an odd way.

"She's not in just now," he said, "but I'd advise you to wait."

I guessed that Quinn had already come, and I walked away from the desk, not knowing what to do. Almost immediately I saw Miss Vannard near the elevators, beckoning to me.

"You are Mr. Seabury, aren't you?" said she, as I came near. "I am Miss Vannard. I have met your cousin, Mr. Deering, as he may have told you. Is he here now?"

I answered no; that he was at the Eglinton.

"Ah, too bad," said she. "I hoped that he had come with you. Could we reach him quickly by telephone? But no, there isn't time; and some one might hear."

"If I judge rightly of your need, my advice will serve as well as his; better, indeed," said I. "You would like to know why Captain Quinn has asked to see you."

"Did you know? How? Is it about that woman who was seen at the Eglinton?"

"Some one has told Captain Quinn that it was you. Say to him that it was not you, but Miss Edith Lockwood, and that, if he will call upon me at the Eglinton one hour from now, he will learn all that he desires to know about the death of Miss Warden. I have startled you. I am sorry; I should have spoken less abruptly."

"Mr. Seabury, what does this mean? Would Mr. Deering wish me to do this? I can't believe it."

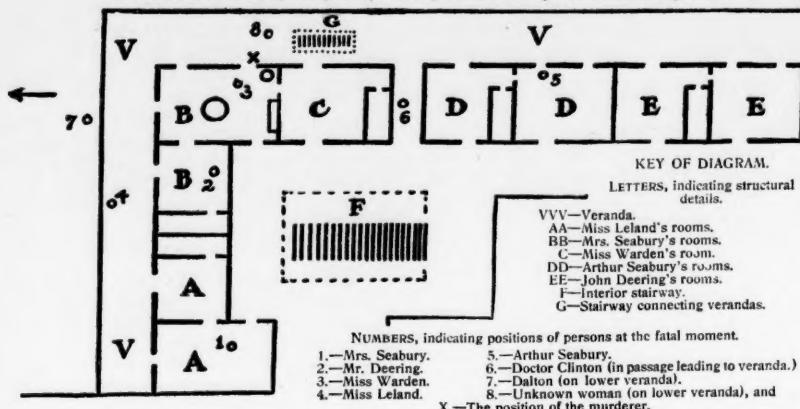
"Mr. Deering would not be in a position to advise until he had heard what I shall presently tell him. I am very sorry that I cannot tell you, also, and immediately. Certain information has come to me in regard to Miss Warden's death, and I am bound to silence until I shall have told a certain person."

"Mrs. Seabury?"

"No—Miss Leland."

"You will tell her what you have just said to me; that it was Miss Lockwood who was there—"

"Miss Leland knows it already, but there are other matters involved. Pardon me if I am unable to speak of them

Diagram of the suite occupied by Mrs. Seabury and her charges at the Hotel Eglinton:

at present. I will ask Mr. Deering to inform you fully, this evening."

"You frighten me out of my wits," said she. "I don't know what to do."

"I think you ought to take advice," said I. "Not mine, of course; I was wrong to offer it. I understood from Mr. Deering that you are here alone upon an errand of your profession—some drawings to be used for illustration. But you have friends here."

She shook her head impatiently.

"I am a very independent girl, Mr. Seabury," she said. "I am used to relying upon myself. Captain Quinn doesn't frighten me; it is you. You give me an impression of impending doom, of wrong, of injustice, weakness, yielding—I don't know what to call it. It's as if somebody were going to make a terrible mistake. I can see Pandora's box on the floor between us, and I think it's you that will raise the lid of it."

"There is no choice," said I.

"Your cousin wouldn't say that, if he were here. Oh, why isn't he? Well, I'll do my best. I'll remember what you have told me. And I must see you after I have spoken with Captain Quinn. Wait for me. Don't fail to do it. Go through this corridor to the farther end; then to the veranda. I will come to you there."

I went slowly to the designated spot, scarce knowing why, and with a very imperfect understanding of the situation. It seemed mere waste of time to think of the intentions and beliefs of other people. The play of cross-purposes would soon end, the sooner the better; I wished to have it over, and regretted that Miss Vannard had persuaded me to this delay. I would rather have gone at once to Sylvia. My scene with her would be the worst, and I was thus drawn toward it by the fundamental tendencies of my nature. Sylvia would suffer exceedingly. What could I do to make it easier for her? All my knowledge of her character seemed useless now. She liked good humor, hope, brightness, an uplifted heart, the leaping impulses of youth, the whole world seen with glamour. In the name of wonder, why had she chosen me instead of Jack? But that is woman. The moon silvered the ocean; music came to me from a distance, with a sweetness that was doubtless half imagined—trivial accessories that have softened so many childish hearts. The poor fool sitting there alone shed tears.

I lost track of time; it seemed that I had been there a long while, when I was aware of a kind of rushing sound, and Jack came through the window, not in great haste, but with a fine fire

burning under the boiler of his energies.

"Look here, old man," said he, in a suppressed tone, "what the devil does this mean? I thought you were coming to the hotel. What have you got on your mind?"

"I have seen Edith," said I. "She has told me."

"Well, what has she told you? What of it? I guess we can handle it, whatever it is."

"The only way to handle it, Jack, is for me to speak out and tell the truth."

"The truth? What is it? Who knows it? Who could tell it, if he did know it? *Quid est veritas?* There's nothing that you have to be so confoundedly careful about as the truth, my boy. I let it alone altogether, as a rule."

"You ask me what the truth is, Jack," said I. "It is this: I put your revolver by mistake into my bag instead of yours. They were standing side by side. They are very much alike, and you had packed the same sort of stuff on top. When I got down here, I carried my bag to my room, before I went to take a look at the others. When I returned, I fell into the miserable state that I have told you of, my mind full of horrible images; and sleep rushed down upon me—took me as I was; a creature fit for the work. I opened my bag and took out the revolver, and loaded it——"

"And what did you do with it, afterward?" he interposed. "Now look here, Arthur, I'm going to admit to you that Edith told me her story, and that I knew what you'd think if you heard it. You weren't in a fit state to hear it; so I tried to cover it up. I fought like the devil to keep the whole thing dark, and so did Sylvia. We made up our minds to keep Edith out of it. And Sylvia, like a brick that she is, went out and spoiled those tracks——"

"You let her do it, Jack?"

"I? Good Lord! I didn't have sense enough to know that they were there; but Sylvia thought it out. I didn't learn of it till after you and I had seen the tracks. Then Sylvia told me, and I burned her shoes in the furnace.

They're ashes now, my boy; and Quinn can't prove who did that trick to save his life. Edith will never tell her story. If you think anybody can get it out of her, you don't know her. I didn't dare to tell her the seriousness of it, but now I can, and that will settle that matter."

"Miss Vannard has told Quinn——"

"Has she? Well, I guess she hasn't. There's a girl! Every drop of blood in my body goes crazy when I think of her."

"You have known her——"

"Several long hours. That's the whole of it. Don't get back to any wild notions about Miss Vannard. I never laid eyes on her before. But what do you suppose she did, just now, after you had tried to scare her beautiful hair gray? She telephoned to me. We had to invent a cipher code on the spur of the moment for fear that some one would be listening; but she communicated the facts, and here I am. Don't worry about what she may say to Quinn. She's far cleverer than he is."

"Answer me one question, Jack," said I. "Did you open your bag before you left the house in Philadelphia?"

"Well, yes; I did. I happened to open it in Mrs. Seabury's room when I went in to see her."

"And your revolver wasn't there?"

"I didn't happen to see it."

"See it? There was no question about seeing it. You don't suppose I hid it under anything, do you? It was right on top, tucked under the strap."

"Well," said he, "it wasn't there."

"Aunt Frances and Wickham were present, of course? I understand. If it weren't for that, you'd have lied to me, wouldn't you?"

"It wouldn't have been necessary," he protested. "There are plenty of ways out of this. It looks bad; that's all. We can't tell the story. We can't allow Edith to say that she saw you on the veranda."

"Within one minute of the time—probably within thirty seconds—and walking directly toward the spot, Jack, my mere presence there excludes everybody else. Do you fancy that some

one committed that crime before my face? He couldn't have known what state I was in."

"Fight it out, fight it out!" he cried. "Don't give up. That's the point. And for Heaven's sake don't tell Sylvia. Arthur, you're responsible for that dear girl's happiness. It lies in your hands, a precious treasure to be guarded all your days. Good Lord, hasn't Sylvia got trouble enough? Bear this yourself, and a part of hers along with it."

"I shall have to lie——"

"Lie, then; lie like a gentleman. I'll help you; it's the nearest duty. And it's a tough one; it inspires me. We shall have to tell Sylvia that you've seen Edith. Now, then, how can we fix up a story to account for the fact that you haven't a suspicion; that you're not in the least disquieted? For what's the use, Arthur? Even taking the most irrational and wild view of the case, that you actually did it, what good can come of telling Sylvia or anybody? We have lost one comrade; we should prize the others doubly. I'm going to pull you both out of this, if it takes my arms off. You didn't do this thing, and I'm going to prove it. Meanwhile, use your wits, and think of any theory that will satisfy Sylvia. Never mind whether it's at all true or particularly plausible. Find one that's useful. Some one's coming! Miss Vannard."

She stepped out from the window, quivering with excitement, and when she spoke to Jack her voice failed her for a moment, and then came shrill like a child's.

"Mr. Deering, I don't know what I've done. I wanted to help you. I have told Captain Quinn that it was I who was there."

Jack was aghast for just the smallest fraction of a second, but he rallied.

"You've saved the whole situation," he said. "You've prevented trouble for all hands of us, and a very grave injustice. Everything will be all right now, and you won't have a bit of annoyance. But it was a brave thing to do. We appreciate it to the——"

"You do," she interposed, "but Mr.

Seabury doesn't. He is shocked at me. Tell the truth. Aren't you?"

"I am shocked by the occurrence," said I, "and chiefly by my own share in it——"

"Don't squirm," she said. "I want to like you, and I shan't, unless you speak straight out to me. It's a dreadful thing that I have done, isn't it?"

"Yes," said I.

She offered me her hand.

"Now, we are friends," said she. "So what's to be done? Would you like me to go and tell somebody else?" and she looked at Jack brightly. "I'm ready, if it will do any good."

"No, no," said he; "it won't be necessary. What did you tell Captain Quinn?"

I could see that Jack was mortally anxious, but no one could have marked it who had not studied him for years. Miss Vannard seemed to take courage from his bearing.

"I said that I went up there for shelter from the storm," she answered, "and that I didn't care to go into the hotel where there were all those women dressed for dinner. I was out on the veranda when the lightning struck, and I was frightened and ran. I saw nobody except a man who came up from the court—you had told me about Dalton, of course. I made it clear that he could not have been in time to fire the shot."

Jack looked to me with wonder.

"Just what I told the coroner," said he. "This story will pass muster, and involve nobody in trouble."

"I told him," continued Miss Vannard, "that I never looked back after I started to run. Any number of people might have come down the stairs from the upper veranda, and I should not have seen them. Miss Lockwood saw no one, of course?"

"No one came down," said I.

"We don't know that," rejoined Jack. "Edith's story doesn't settle it at all, in my mind."

"There is some reason why she must not appear in this affair," said Miss Vannard. "I don't understand it, and it's quite unnecessary that I should. I



Near the Eglinton we encountered Bud Burke, in his best clothes.

put my faith in Mr. Deering; I am perfectly satisfied that he will do what is right. I will take Miss Lockwood's place, and tell her story, so that nothing shall be lost that might help in bringing out the truth, and no unjust suspicion fall upon the innocent."

"It won't be required of you," said Jack. "We will not let you go a step farther in this matter. We would never have let you go so far, if we had dreamed of what you meant to do. When is Quinn to see you again?"

"He said nothing about it. He was very gentle and courteous. He heard my story, and went away."

I asked Miss Vannard about the presence of her name upon that piece of wrapping paper, and she answered that she could not account for it. She had made various purchases in Philadelphia within the last few days, and had written her name upon some parcels that were to be sent to her from an art store, but she could not imagine how one of those sheets had come into Jack's possession. I had a vague impression that she was not altogether frank in this statement; but the matter had shrunk now to the dimensions of a trivial incident, and I gave no serious thought to what she said.

All the deeper parts of my mind were thinking of Sylvia, and of what Jack had urged me to do. Beyond question, she would be far happier in the belief that I knew nothing of my miserable fate. Doubtless Jack understood her feeling better than I did; his plea to me was based upon an accurate knowledge. He was far wiser about women. Sylvia's happiness had been offered to me as a bribe. I stood in precisely the same place as Burke and Lynde and Coroner Ritter. I had been told that Burke supported both his parents, and was very kind to them; Lynde sold himself daily to bedeck his wife; and doubtless a large share of Coroner Ritter's price would go to enhance the material comfort of his numerous children. Happiness in one form or another, and not their own alone, had been offered to these men, and they had taken it. They had traded with a part of such virtue as they had, and I was about to do the same.

My act was in no sense private, a thing that might be honorably hidden. If the county should expend a single dollar to discover Alice's murderer, I must steal that dollar. If a policeman should employ his time upon it, I must rob the community of that man's services. The moral question was explicit, and simple to the level of a child's comprehension; to do wrong for a price, or to do right and pay the penalty. I pictured the black side of it; the derision of the press; the dull, protracted writhings of the law; the squalid scenes in prisons and in courts, through which I must drag Sylvia with one hand and Jack with the other, while poor Aunt Frances followed in our wake, paying with anguish the illimitable bills.

Thus my embittered sense of humor caricatured Mrs. Seabury for the moment; but consideration quickly blotted out the distorted image, and I saw a secret, vengeful, dangerous woman, gifted with abnormal cunning, and equipped with inexhaustible resources. When that horde of blackmailers whose living is in the criminal law should fasten upon Frances Seabury, they would encounter unimagined and intangible

resistance, fatal as the witchcraft of the ancient days, and no man of them would know by what disaster his nearest comrade vanished from the struggle. There was human wreckage in her path already; there would be much more if I should speak. She would undoubtedly defend me, and because of her great wealth my plea of innocence would be scoffed at, even by many who believed it to be true. A long, stubborn, disgraceful struggle would result, and no one would emerge from it clean.

Yet all this had no proper bearing on the moral issue; it was an addition to my price, but not in any sense a justification for taking it. If honesty is the best policy, it ceases to be honesty and becomes mere policy.

My head was so overcrowded with these large questions that I have a very imperfect memory of how we parted from Miss Vannard; but after a while we were on our way to the Eglinton, and Jack was vainly trying to support my spirits and to invent a tenable hypothesis that would serve with Sylvia. Meanwhile, I was sinking deeper into bitterness, and clinging ever more firmly to my ideal of right. A person of my temperament will always tend toward despair at the voice of the sanguine. The first intimation that I am to be cheered up is already a fatal discouragement and the egg of an invincible distrust of the consoler's honesty. If one would give me courage, let him combine cold science with a stern New England principle, and prove to me that facts are more to him than father and mother, wife and child, my heartstrings or his own. I doubt whether he would succeed even then, but that would be the way to try.

"Let me hear the exact truth, Jack," said I. "How and when did you and Sylvia come to know that I had done this?"

He protested against the form of my question. They had never been convinced, he declared; they had feared the effect of the evidence upon me, and perhaps upon others. I think he had now argued himself into this opinion,

but it did not matter; I knew what Sylvia had believed.

"Why, this was the way of it," he said. "Of course, we had worried about you more or less for some time. I had had some rather foolish advice from a doctor about relieving your mind of pecuniary worry. I could have done almost anything else easier than that, and yet I swore that I would. However, we were worried, as I've already told you, and especially in the last day or two. It was utterly impossible to do anything with you. That's the situation; now for the events.

"When you put away that revolver and the cartridges, Sylvia had a vague impression somewhere in a far corner of her mind that you had put it into your bag instead of into mine. She stood there, near my door, thinking about it; she was on the point of opening the grips, and then somehow she didn't. It was one of those strange events that seem like fate, when we find afterward how much depended upon a single act which a mysterious power has prevented us from doing.

"In the first minutes after Alice was hurt, Sylvia's attitude of hostility toward Aunt Frances resulted in an irrational suspicion from which she had not wholly recovered when Quinn questioned her. As I had been alone with Alice—or at least apparently so—Quinn naturally asked whether I had owned a revolver. Sylvia told him the truth. At the moment, she saw no reason to do otherwise; and Quinn led her to tell him about its having been put into the bag. She says that the mention of your name seemed to frighten her; she began then to think of the possibility that that was the weapon which had been used, and to see how dreadfully the crime would be narrowed down to us, if that were true. Then she found the bullet, and she recognized it at once."

"It came from your revolver, Jack?"

He winced at the question, but answered it truly.

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it," said he. "At any rate, Sylvia thought so, and you may imagine the effect.

There were four people who had access to that revolver—we three, and Dalton, whom she had seen with her own eyes almost immediately before the shot was fired, and knew to be innocent. The thing seemed to lie between you and me, Arthur; but, of course, it didn't. I can see a dozen ways—"

"Don't do that, Jack," said I. "It's very kind of you, old man; but it's useless. Go on with the story. Meanwhile, you had begun to have your own suspicions."

"That writing of Alice's frightened me, I'll admit," said he, "and then I'd opened my own grip, you know, at the house. Take it all together, I was sufficiently alarmed to search your things. I found your bag lying on a table in your room. It lay on its side, with the clasps open."

"I left it so," said I. "When I went to my room, I started to open the bag, and it was then that I felt the drowsiness, the pressure of that sleep descending on me. I sank into a chair. You know the rest of it."

He put a hand upon my shoulder.

"Never mind that," said he. "You didn't do it. But you will understand that we were in a tight place, Sylvia and I, after we got together and found out that we were both tormented by the same delusion. We had one brief talk that nobody knows about—through a window of that room; and Sylvia had the bullet then, but dared not try to give it to me, for there was an eye upon her every instant. Later, I saw Aunt Frances, and got a hint about Edith, and an amazing story about the bullet. She told me that Clinton had it, and that I should go to him and get it. I didn't know what to make of that, and I dared not ask any questions. I went to Clinton, as you know; I met him on the street, and his state of mind was simply appalling, but nothing could be got from him—except the bullet; I got that. Then I saw Edith, and heard her story. Clinton had already been to her house, and she had refused to see him. I returned to the Eglinton, with my mind made up to see

Sylvia first before giving Aunt Frances the bullet that Clinton had prepared. I found Sylvia in a pinch, and I passed off the wrong bullet on Quinn.

"You may remember that Sylvia and I stood together for a few minutes in that room, after she had sent you to hold Quinn's attention. She told me that the real bullet was on the table in the corner. I got it, and gave it to Aunt Frances, telling her the story. She seemed very well satisfied.

"And now I've explained everything except Clinton's conduct. Do you understand that yourself? You don't? Well, he hasn't told me why he acted in that way, but it seems to me to be clear enough. Judge of it by your own experience. Edith told you that she saw you going toward the spot from which the shot must have been fired, only a very few minutes——"

"Seconds, Jack."

"Well, just before it happened. And you immediately leaped to the conclusion that you were guilty. Clinton was deceived in precisely the same way. Where was the man going? You heard Alice's letter. Clinton was going out upon the veranda, and he had come to the door at the end of the passage. He looked through the glass at the top of the door, and saw Edith at the head of the exterior stairway, ascending. It was at that instant, doubtless, that she saw you. Clinton certainly had no desire to encounter Edith, then; he retreated into the passage, perhaps to the upper hall; and he was there when the flagstaff was destroyed. Probably he supposed that the house had been struck, and his first thought was for Edith. He ran to look for her, and she was gone. Returning, he heard my cry for help, and went with me into that room.

"I tell you, Arthur, that the shock of what he saw there was enough to prostrate any man. He had the same evidence that you had, except that his own eyes had given it to him. Whether he went far enough to believe that Edith had gone mad from jealousy, and had shot Alice in mistake for Sylvia, I don't know; but he must have

seen how terrible her position might be. For all that he knew, then, a dozen people might have seen and recognized her. You saw his condition. Only his professional training saved him from collapse.

"When he was released from that ordeal, he did an insane thing; he went to Aunt Frances for help. She was the only person who seemed powerful enough to nullify the law and silence the press, and he was in a position to make a bargain with her, through this matter of Sylvia's. Of course, Aunt Frances probed him to the heart, and frightened him until his blood turned to water. It's my opinion that she told him that the bullet had been found, and that it was of the calibre of Edith's revolver. At any rate, she persuaded him to prepare the bogus bullet, thus making himself an accessory after the fact, and still further binding him to stand by the bargain that they made. Its terms are easily guessed; he was to cease making trouble between her and Sylvia, in return for a guarantee that Edith should be protected. There's the whole matter, as I see it."

"Only one point remains," said I; "what did I do with the revolver?"

"You never had it, Arthur."

"I believe that I merely tossed it over the veranda railing, and that Dalton picked it up, recognized it, and is keeping it to trade upon. We know from Sylvia's evidence that he was below. This, in a measure, will explain his flight. His fear of Aunt Frances leads him to negotiate from a safe distance. Probably she has already heard from him. I hate to say this, because it's not quite fair to Dalton; and yet it's idle to suppose that his flight can have a creditable explanation."

We had come near to the Eglinton, and could see already the outer picket line of the reporters.

"I think we'd better take a turn about," said Jack. "We might meet Sylvia. I didn't dare to tell her that you were at the Donaldson, for she'd have gone there with me, and I couldn't take the risk of your condition. She was extremely anxious, and it's not at

all impossible that she has gone out alone to look for you. She may come upon us from either direction, and we're not ready. You must have a theory."

"I shall tell her the truth," said I. "Any other course will be both wrong and useless. There is but one theory, one certainty."

"Oh, no, no," he protested. "You view it morbidly. And you're going to take away Sylvia's hope. She's a woman, Arthur; can't you understand? She doesn't want to know the truth, if it's bad. What she wants is to keep this black horror out of your heart. Are you going to tell her that it's there? Once let her think so, and she'll grieve for you to the last day of her life. Whenever she looks at you, she'll see that aching sorrow in your breast. If a cloud crosses your face, she'll say to herself: 'Now he's thinking of it,' and her own heart will bleed. Are you going to inflict that torment upon Sylvia who loves you?"

The vehemence of his utterance roused me to a considerable warmth.

"I will not believe that Sylvia wants me to be a dishonest and cowardly rascal for her sake," said I. "That is what I shall be, if I conceal what I have done. It's not a question of telling her alone, but of speaking out to anybody who will hear. This is not a private matter; the public has a right to know who did this thing. And I did it. I talked loudly enough this morning about finding out the truth; and now I've got it. If it concerned a stranger, I should certainly tell it. It concerns myself, and I shan't cover it up."

"This is an extreme view," said he. "It's a natural reaction from the life that you've been leading. You've got a conscience as unyielding as a pebble of quartz, and for the last three or four years you've had to put it in your shoe and walk on it; and now you're nearly crazy with the pain. I've watched this trouble coming on for a long time. I've seen you prance around your room after you'd turned in one of those expense accounts to Aunt Frances—not dishonest, and yet not open; not the sort of

thing that you can stand. And I've seen you get red in the forehead over nothing worse than the transfer sheets of some ordinarily crooked corporation. Now, those things bounce off my hide like bird shot from an elephant, but they sink into your vitals. And at last the opportunity has come for you to break away. In this great issue of right and wrong, which fate has thrust upon you, there appears the chance to balance all accounts. You rush upon this martyrdom with a kind of passion; but, my dear boy, I have a sense of duty also, such as it is, and it constrains me to point out to you that Sylvia's body lies across your narrow *via crucis*, and you must tread upon it, if you take another step."

I was moved by the feeling he displayed, but not at all by his argument. It seemed to me, on the contrary, that the right course would be best for Sylvia.

"You have too much hope, Jack," said I. "It blinds you to the facts. You have a rainbow in each eye. There is no future for Sylvia and me. We are parted, whatever I may do; for a man with such a thing as this upon his mind has no right to join his destiny to any other person's. If I am ever free again, after I surrender myself upon this charge, I shall go away and live my life alone, if I can live it at all. If Sylvia cares for me, it is a matter of days; her heart has flamed up all in a moment, as mine has; and now is the time to quench it. There will be some disagreeable things to go through; but I shall hurry them, and force the law to a more prompt decision than was ever given before in the case of any murderer with money to protect him. This sounds harsh and bitter, and as if I didn't understand and appreciate what you and Sylvia have tried to do—oh, more than that; what you are! But we must face the facts. I am a gangrened limb, and the time has come to cut me off."

"Damnation!" exclaimed Jack. "This is worse than I thought. Something's got to be done about this, right away. Don't let yourself be deluded by the

notion that I'm going to give up. The storm clouds in your eyes are no more real than the rainbows in mine, my son. You come along with me."

He took me by the arm, and wheeled me around, and we started off at a great pace. I made no resistance, having exhausted myself with that last wild and crude harangue, and it was some minutes later when I asked him where we were going.

"To Clinton's," said he. "It's my opinion that that fellow can help us, if he will. You know where he stood. If he didn't see you pass that door at the end of the passage—"

"It would prove nothing. I might easily have crouched below the level of the glass panel."

"You weren't ten feet away from it when Edith saw you," he responded, "and you hadn't crouched then. If Clinton didn't see you pass the door, you didn't pass it."

"Haven't you asked him?"

"Not directly," he replied. "I didn't dare. I have questioned him as best I might, however, and I have failed to get anything out of him. But he owes me a heavy debt for what I did for him when Ritter had him on the rack, and I'm going to try to collect."

There was a light in Clinton's office, and when we rang, the doctor came himself to admit us. At the first glance, I saw that his mind had been vastly relieved, and I rightly guessed that he had seen Edith and had made his peace with her. This augured well for Jack's endeavor, but it interested me only because of my wish for Edith's happiness and my good will toward Clinton. He could not know anything in my favor, because there was nothing to be known; and if he had possessed evidence against me, he would have used it to shield Edith.

"Clinton," said Jack, when we had passed through into the office, "I did you a good turn this afternoon. Will you forgive me for reminding you of it?"

"I am glad to be reminded," said he. "I owe much to both of you."

"Well, this is pay day," responded

Jack. "If there is anything due to us, let's have it on the nail. We need it."

Something of Clinton's former manner—the constraint and caution which had so baffled me—returned at these words.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"Tell me where you were when Alice was hurt, and just what you saw and heard," said Jack. "We will treat this as sacredly confidential, Clinton, and I tell you it's the bread of life to us."

Clinton sat down at the desk, and held his head in his hands. The silence seemed interminable, but I suppose it could not have lasted more than two or three minutes.

"Deering," said he, looking up, "I can't do this. I'm sorry, but it's impossible."

"You have seen Edith, haven't you?" said I. "She has told you her story."

"Yes."

"You may judge, then, what we wish to know."

"I am in a position to judge far better than you are," said he, "and I must decline to speak."

Upon this Jack made a strong plea, and Clinton seemed much affected, but he still preserved his attitude of resistance.

"I will say, however, that this refusal is not final," said he. "Under certain conditions I might speak to you privately, and in strict confidence."

"To me alone?" said Jack.

"To one or both of you," was the reply. "It does not matter."

"Name the conditions."

Clinton gave some time to thought. "Where is that bullet?" he asked.

"The real one?" said Jack. "I gave it to Mrs. Seabury."

His manner was clearly intended to set an example of frankness.

"Was it fired from your revolver?" Clinton asked.

"Yes."

"Previous to the shooting, was that revolver in your bag on the table by the window?"

"It was not," said Jack.

"You will testify to that effect?"

"I'll do better. I'll prove it absolutely."

"You know where the revolver was, then?"

"I do not," said Jack; "I have no idea. But I know where it wasn't."

"The person who killed Miss Warden must have brought the revolver to that place. He could not have found it there. Is that the fact?"

"That is the fact."

"And there's no doubt about the bullet?"

"I didn't own the only revolver of that kind in the world," replied Jack, "but they are mighty scarce in this country. You may estimate the chance that the one which was used was not mine."

Again Clinton gave some moments to deep consideration.

"If these things can be proved," said he, "and that bullet can be produced and thoroughly identified, I will tell you privately—you two men—just what I know. If you can then explain it in such a manner as to make you willing to disclose it—" He paused. "I was about to say," he resumed, "that I should offer no objection; but that is not true. It would not be necessary, however, for me to do so. You would not wish this to be disclosed. You understand, of course," he added, "that if you report this conversation, I shall deny it."

"Report it?" demanded Jack. "To whom?"

"To Mrs. Seabury."

"Does your reticence depend upon your fear of her?"

"I think I'd better not say any more," replied Clinton, with hesitation. "I am very anxious to oblige you, but—I have named my conditions."

"Let me see if I understand them," said Jack. "I am to produce the bullet, and I am to prove that the revolver must have been brought to the scene. That's all you have said, but I can see further into it. These proofs must be made available to you. In other words, Edith's safety must be absolutely assured."

"The proofs must be made available

to me," said Clinton. "I must be satisfied that that evidence cannot fail me at need."

"Very well," responded Jack. "This may take a day or two, not longer." He turned to me. "Arthur, will you give me this time? Will you wait until we hear what Clinton has to say?"

I shook my head.

"It's not of the least use, Jack," said I. "Can't you understand Clinton's position? What he has to say is of such a nature as to invite powerful opposition from us—or, as he looks at it, from Mrs. Seabury. Isn't that so, doctor?"

"I must decline to answer," returned Clinton.

"In other words," said I, "Clinton's evidence will reflect upon one of us; and before he gives it, he very naturally wishes to be secured against any retaliatory measures on Mrs. Seabury's part. When he has spoken, Jack, I shall be even more bound than I am now to take the course which you oppose. Then why delay? Why—"

I was interrupted by the sound of a bell, and Clinton arose and steadied himself, revealing thus the nervous strain of the interview.

"This is probably a patient on whose account I returned earlier than I should otherwise have done," said he. "In that case—"

He indicated the door leading toward the house. We bowed, and he passed through into the reception room. A moment later, I heard Sylvia's voice.

"Arthur? Is he here?" she asked.

I understood more from those four words than from all that Jack had said to me. A woman's anxiety is so much keener than a man's; it takes a so much finer edge. I comprehended now for the first time how deeply Sylvia was concerned for me. She did not believe that I could bear the knowledge of what I had done, and she was probably right; but that was a small matter. I saw only her suffering, and the deadly intensity of her effort to stand between me and my destiny, to outwit and beat off fate.

"Yes," answered Clinton.

"Is he——" She choked upon a word.
"Tell me! Tell me!"

"I don't understand," said Clinton coldly, as I thought. "Nothing has happened to him. He is all right."

I heard the voice of her heart speaking in a sob of exquisite relief.

"Sylvia!" I called, taking a stride toward the doors.

Jack had me by the arm in an instant.

"What are you going to do?" he whispered. "Will you put Sylvia back where she was five seconds ago?"

"I can't hurt her any more," said I. "I've taken my price."

At this, the doors were drawn wide open, and I saw her standing on the threshold. I stretched out my hands to her, and she ran to me.

"Sylvia," I said, "it's not true, not true at all. I could have set you right with a word. I've seen Edith, and heard her story, and I know what you and Jack have feared. But it's impossible—utterly impossible that I should have done this thing."

I must have played my part well, for Sylvia was convinced without a reason. She had heard me say "not true," "impossible," and she seemed not to care to know why. The most filmy explanation, scarce even a falsehood, would have sufficed in that moment, and an adroit person in my place might have saved a fragment of his self-respect. But, like other men who have inherited more conscience than capacity, I sin with a grinding thoroughness when once I set about it. I had prepared a lie of weight and magnitude, and nothing short of choking could prevent my telling it. I could not even allow Sylvia to enjoy the happy tears that I had bought for her, but must interrupt her in the midst of them, that she might hear my story.

"Edith is, in effect, an eye-witness against me," said I, "and it's no wonder that you and Jack were so cruelly deceived. Except for one blessed fact, I, too, must have been convinced; but that fact is absolutely conclusive. It is simply this: I had no weapon, and no possible, no conceivable means of get-

ting one. You supposed that I put Jack's revolver into my bag by mistake, and brought it down here in that way. No other explanation is within the bounds of reason. If the revolver was not in my bag, it wasn't anywhere, so far as I am concerned. And I know that it wasn't, because I opened the bag as soon as I got to my room, while I was as broad awake as I am now."

At this Jack seized a hand of mine, and numbed it with his grip.

"I didn't dare to ask you outright," he said. "I was afraid you'd know why. I tried to get around it, and was foolish enough to think that you had answered me."

"I recall," said I, "your asking me to tell you what I did, before that wretched sleep descended on me; but the opening of the bag seemed trivial. I suppose I must have failed to mention it."

"It doesn't matter, now," said he. "We've had our fright, and it's all over." As a sort of echo of these words, Sylvia put a whole prayer of thanksgiving into a single inarticulate and beautiful sound.

My eye happened to fall upon Clinton, who was leaning against his desk, looking at Sylvia in a steady and strange way.

"If I have heard the facts rightly stated," said he, "this proves that the revolver must have been taken from the bag—whatever one it was really put into—before you left the house in Philadelphia."

"Not necessarily," said Jack. "Either of them may have been opened during the journey."

"Very unlikely," remarked Clinton.

"I think so, too," said Sylvia. "But there's no one who could have done it except Dalton, and it's hardly fair to accuse him."

"It might be suggested that Dalton has accused himself," returned the doctor. "He has run away."

"But Sylvia saw him almost at the moment when Alice was shot," I hastened to say. "He is certainly innocent."

"He may have given the revolver to

some one else," said Sylvia. "And to whom?" The quality of her tone suddenly changed, and her look as well. "Suppose he did take it," she continued. "He may have been sure that you put it into your bag, and not Jack's. In such a case, he may have taken it with the best motives. He is shrewd; he has been trained to an excessive caution in that house. Arthur, he may not have wished you to have it, knowing that you were ill."

"These are mere fancies," said I, "mere idle speculations, Sylvia."

"What Doctor Clinton has said is not an idle speculation," she rejoined; "it is an undeniable fact. Dalton has disappeared; he can't be found; he may have gone a long way by this time. And do you think he had much money for such a purpose? He could hardly have saved it from his wages. Where did he get it, then? Who gave it to him?"

Both Jack and I endeavored to interpose, but she proceeded without heeding us.

"If he took the revolver for the reason that I gave—and there's no other—what did he do with it? Why, the question answers itself! There is but one thing he would have dreamed of doing. Dalton, the slave, the thrall? I tell you, he gave it to Mrs. Seabury."

"Sylvia, this won't do," said I, and glanced uneasily at Clinton.

"You need have no anxiety on my account," said he. "My tongue will commit no more blunders of indiscretion. And it would be most unfortunate if this theory should be set forth as coming from Miss Leland, for it would tend to emphasize her feeling of hostility toward Mrs. Seabury."

The color rushed into Sylvia's face. "I shall not be frightened into changing or concealing my attitude toward Mrs. Seabury," she retorted. "If a more perfect knowledge of the truth could change my feeling, you have only to speak. I think it would be well if you should speak now."

"I have said all I can," said Clinton, in an unsteady voice.

Sylvia made a slight gesture of fare-



She was very beautiful in this mood; very strange and thrilling.

well, and turned toward the door. I served her as an escort, while Jack, with his usual readiness in such matters, softened with good humor the effect of our abrupt departure. From the porch he called to us that he would stay a moment, and would overtake us. We went on, therefore, toward the Eglington.

"I was angry with Doctor Clinton," said Sylvia, "and I am the more angry with him because he made me so. Can you understand that? My heart had been lifted up, Arthur, from a dreadful depth. I would have wished to be at peace for a little while, after what I had endured. It seems strange to speak of peace at such a time, and yet my anxiety for you had so obliterated ev-

ery other element of torture that I ceased to suffer anything, all in a moment, when you told me that I need not fear for you. Let us not talk of bitter things to-night. Let us declare a truce until to-morrow. Will you?"

I cast a glance inward upon my own mind and soul, and was appalled at sight of the besieging enemies with whom that truce must be arranged. Yet it would be weak to pay my price for Sylvia's happiness, and then destroy it by my own gloomy bearing; wherefore I answered with brave words, and she breathed deep and her eyes shone.

Near the Eglinton we encountered Bud Burke, in his best clothes, including a really remarkable waistcoat, across which was looped a bright gold chain that might have served to hoist an anchor. He doffed his hat to us with something of a flourish, and I responded in my best manner. I had helped to bribe this gentleman at noon, and in the evening I had taken a bribe myself. Certainly, upon the score of conduct, I had now no choice but to salute him as an equal.

CHAPTER XVII.

At the Eglinton we found Mrs. Hammond, the housekeeper, posted by Mrs. Seabury in a strategic position, and charged with a message for Sylvia—a doll-play message, full of admonitions about going to bed early and avoiding worry; characteristically compounded of sincerity and design, its object being to reveal an unchanged affection, and to convey a crudely veiled intimation of the necessity of preserving our domestic harmony before the eyes of the world in the present emergency. Mrs. Seabury, it appeared, was occupied with an important consultation, and might not be free till midnight; wherefore she sent her love to us, and the assurance of her watchful care.

For Mrs. Hammond's sake, Sylvia received this message with a gentle mien, but the incident seemed to exasperate her almost beyond endurance, filling her with the sort of wrath which

finds its natural expression in restless physical activity. We went to Sylvia's sitting room—though, in the former epoch which the tragedy had ended, we should not have done so; we should have gone to Mrs. Seabury's apartments or to the veranda, for all our ways had once been regulated by odd, antiquated rules, the propriety of a young girls' boarding school.

As soon as the door was shut, Sylvia began to pace the floor as if she had come for that especial purpose, after a long, distressing abstinence from a favorite exercise. She moved with an astonishing, lithe grace and with a swiftness all potential and suggested, the infinite variety of posture being delicately controlled as are the cadences of passionate music. This was a very rare presentment of the blue-eyed Sylvia, superficially a Saxon—if there is such a creature still in the world—but there exists in her a Welsh strain from a great-grandfather, and now that ancient gentleman, with a long line of ghosts behind him, paced up and down with his descendant, twanging the harps of the emotions and singing of imperishable, haunting obligations.

She was very beautiful in this mood; very strange and thrilling. I was charmed out of all reason; I was like a child following with outstretched hand the floating wonder of the fields, and careless of the rift that opens in the way. There was nothing left of me but the fascinated gaze and the desire of the heart which presently would have found expression, to my own great shame. For I had nothing to offer; my life tottered on the brink of ruin; to-morrow I might be in prison, helpless, in the time of Sylvia's need. She saved me from this indefensible act by flashing me a question conceived in such insanity that it made me sane by force of contrast.

"Arthur, what would happen if I should not return with you from Philadelphia?"

She meant to-morrow, when we were to take Alice to her grave; and her suggestion touched upon every difficulty and peril of our situation. Mrs.

Seabury had given pledges for our immediate return, and she would go to any length rather than have Sylvia separate herself from us. Quinn and every other person in authority, bribed or unbribed, would demand that Sylvia should come back, and the press would very reasonably look upon her absence as in one way or another the direct result of our tragedy. There was too much of this for utterance, and I stood speechless.

"Would Captain Quinn bring me back?" she asked. "Would he cause my arrest? I believe he would. I am the one who is really under suspicion."

"We are all under suspicion," said I. "We must exercise every possible kind of caution."

"It is monstrous that I should go on in this way," she said. "Understand me, Arthur; I would eat Mrs. Seabury's bread for ten years longer and swallow a deadly sin with every mouthful of it, if I could set my father right by doing so. But Alice is dead, and Doctor Clinton has been silenced. It seems to me that I have no hope here, and that I ought to be in Philadelphia, or wherever I may find some one who knew my father well." She paused a moment with her clasped hands pressed upon her brow. "So many of them are dead! Oh, Arthur, it seems as if a special fate descended upon them all—all my father's friends."

My nature prompted me to tell her that her task was utterly futile, and I was restrained only by an emotional absurdity—by something like jealousy of Jack. He was the sort of man whom Sylvia needed at that moment, a glad false prophet with the sunrise in his hand. I was afraid to be myself, and to shed darkness on her.

"The facts in regard to your father are not past finding out," said I. "All that we need is patience—and a little money, of course. But you mustn't assume that the facts will condemn Aunt Frances; they may acquit her, and you must give her a full and fair hearing. I think the honest way to act in this matter is to go to her at the earliest practicable instant and talk

straight out, not with bitterness, but with candor and fairness. Then, if circumstances force you to live at her expense for a little while, you can do it without loss of self-respect."

She ceased to move aimlessly about, and came straight to where I stood. Her mood seemed to change and soften.

"One thing is sure," she said, with quiet decision; "I have managed this affair very ill—oh, wretchedly—far worse than you imagine. I tried to be a match for Mrs. Seabury in silent methods, and in trickery, and she has beaten me, and laughed at me. And now, we have come to this dreadful situation. There seems to be no way of going on, and yet I must; nothing, no error, no misfortune, can alter in the slightest degree my duty to my father. It is just the same now as it was before. Will you help me? I will take your advice. I will do whatever you think is right. Here is a terrible burden, heavier than you believe, and it's not yours at all. Will you share it?"

I trembled at her nearness, and yet she seemed remote and separate, even elusive and retreating. It was as if this were the moment when I must take her, when I must enfold her life in mine, or she would forever escape me.

"Share it, Sylvia?" said I. "Yes. But what can I do?"

I turned suddenly away from her. It was impossible to look upon her any longer, and not try to break the barrier between us. I said to myself: "What is really going to happen? Am I deceived? Will any one except Jack ever know what I have done?" And then the black certainty closed in upon me out of the future. Some one would surely be accused; the nature of the deed, and the fatal circumstance of Mrs. Seabury's great wealth, would make it utterly impossible that the death of Alice should be left to take a place among the criminal riddles that have never had an answer. The accusation, the long imprisonment, the hazard of a trial, ending almost certainly in a disagreement; delays upon delays, another trial, and a wilderness of technical appeals—all these lay in somebody's path.

I must endure these miseries myself, or lurk dishonorably silent, an act not to be thought of. The gross fact stood clear, impossible to disguise. If I should speak a word of love to Sylvia, I should be asking her to give her life and youth to a man who faced at least two years in prison, and an experience from which the victim always emerges with broken health and a scarred mind.

I went to Sylvia again, and spoke to her as if she were a man—or tried to do so.

"You can bank on me for all there is in me," said I. "You know that already. We haven't lived under the same roof all this time without getting to understand each other's faults and virtues. What my virtues are I don't know, but my chief fault is uselessness, irresolution, a general unfitness to fight the world in my own quarrel or any one else's. I'll try to remedy this, for your sake; and the first step in that direction must be taken at this present moment. Don't ask me about it in advance. Trust me. It's the best thing to do, I'm sure."

Without waiting for her to reply, I went to the telephone, and gave the number of Mrs. Seabury's apartment. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Sylvia watching me, surprised and not quite pleased. I tried to think of something gentle to be said, but before the words would shape themselves, I heard my aunt's voice.

"Arthur, is that you?" she said, in her most amiable tone. "What do you want?"

"Can you see me privately for ten minutes, aunty? It is important."

"Yes, I guess so," she replied. "Where are you?" And when I had told her, "Come as soon as you like," said she. "Mr. Cushing is here, but doubtless he would like to smoke a cigar on the veranda while we talk."

"What are you going to do?" said Sylvia, when I had hung up the receiver. "But you told me not to ask. Will you come back?"

"It may be late," said I.

"The hour doesn't matter," she replied. "You will find me waiting here."

When I entered Mrs. Seabury's sitting room, Cushing was just vanishing through the window, leaving a trail of smoke behind him. I had a fancy that he might have gone through the floor, with the accompaniment of smoke and sulphur.

"Well, Arthur," said my aunt, "I hear that you have seen Edith Lockwood."

"Did Jack tell you?"

"No; he hasn't been here, but I have various sources of information. What did Edith say to you?"

"She saw me on the veranda just before Alice was shot," said I. "You know all about it, don't you?"

"Why, yes," said she. "I got something of the sort from Jack. But you mustn't worry about it. We'll see that the papers don't get hold of it."

"Aunty," said I, "you mustn't try to blind me any longer. The chances are a thousand to one that I killed Alice while I was asleep. Two hours ago I was sure of it, but now I'm not; I won't permit myself to be. All that I care for in the world depends upon that one chance in the thousand, that I didn't do it. You think I did—"

"No, no, no," she interposed. "Of course, you didn't. There is something more in this case than daylight sleep-walking. Put the idea out of your mind."

"Aunty, this is very kind of you," said I. "You and Sylvia and Jack have certainly shown a love for me which I don't merit. But it's quite useless now to hide the fact that you have known the—"

"Do you think I was referring to you this afternoon, in what I said to you?" she asked. "Well, I wasn't. I know very well that you didn't do this. You must take my word for it, Arthur. You must rely upon me. I will bring the facts to light in due time."

"Will you let me tell you how to do it?" said I. "In my opinion, it can be done to-night."

I caught a searching gleam from her eyes. She seemed for the moment somewhat disquieted.

"To-night?" she said. "By what means?"

"Doctor Clinton knows the truth," said I, "or, at least, he has some very important fact which he has not disclosed to any one. He has held it in reserve because he still fears for Edith; but this evening he offered a sort of bargain. Jack and Sylvia and I were at his house. He wants two things, and it really seems to me that there's no objection to his having them. First, he wants some assurance in regard to the bullet. You have kept it?"

"Yes," said she. "What does Edith's amateur attorney think I ought to do with it?"

"Doctor Clinton wants to be assured that it will be produced if Edith should be accused."

"Well," said she; "what else?"

"He wants some sort of written statement from Jack that the revolver was not in his bag which stood on the table by the window. Of course, those two points are all that he needs to cover. If Alice was shot with Jack's revolver and it couldn't have been obtained upon the scene, then Edith is perfectly safe. She couldn't even be held; she could be released immediately upon that evidence, for it constitutes a physical impossibility."

"It seems to me," said she, "that Doctor Clinton asks a great deal. What does he offer? What does he know?"

"He hasn't told us, naturally," I replied; "but I judge from his manner that it relates to me; in fact, I am sure of it. He probably saw me go by the door at the end of the passage, toward the window through which the shot was fired. He may even have seen the weapon in my hand."

"Why didn't he say so to me?" she demanded, seemingly with perfect sincerity.

"He didn't dare. That would have put him in direct hostility to us. He would have been accusing me, and he was afraid of what you might do in my defense."

She made a kind of murmuring sound. "Yes," said she. "I see. I'll think of that." And for some moments

she sat very still, looking over my head at the wall behind me.

"Call Clinton up," she said at last, with a slight gesture toward the telephone. "Let him come over here. I may meet those terms of his; but don't tell him so."

A sick horror went over me. Now, indeed, the matter would be brought to an issue, and my uncertainty came to an end. I walked to the telephone somewhat unsteadily.

"Tell him to come to your room," said Mrs. Seabury. "Afterward, give orders that he shall be shown up immediately. Then go to your room and wait. When he comes, let me know. And don't talk in the meantime."

Clinton received my message with excitement. He could hardly have been in doubt as to its inner purport, and perhaps he felt that Edith's danger was about to disappear through his agency. When he told me that he would come immediately, I had a vision of the man running along the streets, careless of comments, thinking only of his goal. Yet the time seemed long while I waited in my room—a long time to waste, for I had not one intelligent thought in all that interval. I merely suffered, expecting the worst; thinking of Sylvia as lost to me, and choking with childish sobs as I walked here and there, with a futile, fierce energy, bumping blindly against the furniture.

Whether Clinton had really run, I don't know, but he had the look of it. He entered my room in that state where a man is too weak to breathe. I pointed to a chair and he sank into it, but the instant that he felt any return of strength, he jumped up again, too nervous to sit still.

"What is this about?" he asked. "What are we going to do?" He looked around the room as if the answer might be hidden somewhere.

"Mrs. Seabury wants to talk to you," I replied. "That's all I'm privileged to say. If you'll wait—" But with that I heard the inaudible, the touch of Mrs. Seabury's finger on the door. She did not wait for any response, but entered and, with just a nod to Clinton,

crossed to a chair that stood beyond the table.

"Arthur, will you please clear these things off?" she said, and when I had bared the table, she set down a little black shopping bag upon it. Then she leaned forward and looked steadily at Clinton for some moments.

"Well," said she, "I hear you want something. What is it, and what do you offer?"

"Mrs. Seabury," he replied, "it is useless to disguise the fact that you and I are not upon good terms. We distrust each other. But I desire to say that my friendship for the other members of your family is absolutely unchanged. If I should be compelled to do injury to one of them, it would be like cutting off my own hand."

"You won't injure anybody," she replied, "and if you stretch out your hand to do so, I shall cut it off, and save you the trouble. At the same time," she added, "I will say that I have no wish to hurt you or Miss Lockwood, whom you wish to protect. We are now met in a kind of truce. If you behave honestly and rightly, we shall all benefit from this interview. Your interests in some degree coincide with mine. Think of them; keep them in mind. That is business, Doctor Clinton, a subject upon which you are profoundly ignorant. But you are in good company to learn."

"I have certain information," he responded, "but I dare not give it to you, unless I am protected. I have already indicated, in Mr. Seabury's presence, the nature of that protection."

"Yes; he has told me," said she. "You want assurance that the bullet which caused Miss Warden's death will appear in Miss Lockwood's defense, if that should ever be necessary. Now, suppose I give you that bullet, what will you do with it?"

"You may be sure that I shall keep it safely," he replied.

"I suppose you are aware," said she, "that in suppressing it you will be in danger of the criminal law."

"I will be frank with you," returned Clinton, after a pause. "I have taken

advice. If I obtain possession of that bullet, I shall turn it over to my lawyer, with any other tangible evidence that may come into my hands. It will be in a sealed packet, however, and will not be used except in the event of Miss Lockwood's arrest. My lawyer assures me that he can evade a criminal action for the suppression of evidence."

"He can evade anything, if he's a good lawyer," said Mrs. Seabury. "Who is he?"

"Clifford Haynes."

"Well," said she thoughtfully, "he'll do."

Knowing that Haynes was in Mrs. Seabury's pay, I perceived that our proceedings had developed into a mere trick upon Clinton. If he should give anything to Haynes, he would never get it back again, except at Mrs. Seabury's nod. Yet why should I be disturbed by this? If any real injustice should be threatened, I had only to speak out, and bring it to an end. Not that this made what we were doing one whit more honest; it merely put me in control of the consequences.

"As to the fact that the revolver was not in the bag, nor procurable in any manner on the scene of the crime," said Mrs. Seabury, "I suppose you'd like an affidavit from Jack. He knows all about it."

"Will Mr. Deering give me such a statement?" he asked, amazed.

"In exchange for yours," said she.

"For mine?"

"You don't suppose that I'm going to deal with you upon a basis of mere spoken words?" said she. "You want something tangible. So do I. Your statement must be on paper, and it must be sworn to."

He was very much disturbed.

"I don't believe you really desire that, Mrs. Seabury," said he. "You will not wish my statement to be read by any notary or——"

"No notary or other such person, employed by me, ever reads anything," she interposed. "I'll attend to that. There's a good man right in this house. I've used him before."

Clinton stared at her somewhat stupidly, and then inclined his head.

"Here is the point," said Mrs. Seabury. "Miss Lockwood says that she saw Arthur on the veranda, a few minutes before Miss Warden was shot."

"A few seconds, aunty," said I. "And I was going toward that window."

"Arthur is very much worried," said she. "I am doing all this merely to relieve him. He is perfectly safe; I will protect all my young people absolutely. But in Arthur's present state of health it would be unfortunate if he should have anything of this sort on his mind, and, therefore, I am dealing with you, and buying your story. You stood in the passage leading out to the veranda during all the critical time. There is a glass panel in the upper part of the door; indeed, the door may have been a little way open, for the wind was drawing strongly through the house. I believe you know that Arthur did not pass that door; in other words, that he could not have reached the spot from which the shot came."

Clinton turned to me.

"Are you prepared to testify that Edith descended the stairs before Miss Warden was killed?" he asked.

"I am not," I replied. "I did not see Edith, nor know that she had been there."

"She says that you were looking straight toward her. Why, then, did you fail to see her?"

"Because I was asleep."

"Asleep!" he cried, starting from his chair. "Do you mean that you were somnambulating? Is that a habit of yours? Have you done it before?"

"In childhood, often," I replied, "and several times within the last month, under peculiar circumstances."

"For Heaven's sake, Seabury, what does this mean?" he exclaimed. "Are you prepared to stick to this story if—if there should be need of it?"

"It is my defense," said I. "That's all there is to it. I killed that poor girl in a state of unconsciousness. I remember nothing about it. I only know I must have done it because there is

nobody else who could. Clinton, speak out. Don't hold me in the air any longer. You saw me; you have thought from the first that it was I. Say so, and that will end it."

"Mrs. Seabury," said he, after a silence that seemed endless, "I don't know what to do. Has this story been prepared? Do you wish me to support it?"

"Support it?" she cried. "No; certainly not. You can't support it without falsehood, because it isn't true. Arthur had no hand in this."

"I am strongly of that opinion," he said slowly. "In fact, I know that he could not have shot Miss Warden. We can protect him, but can we also protect Miss Leland? I would like to hear you say something upon that point before I give my evidence to you."

"Don't worry about Miss Leland," said she. "I will take care of her."

He leaned forward, and they looked steadily into each other's eyes.

"It seems to me that you are speaking the truth," he said. "May God forgive you, if you're not! If Miss Leland did this thing, her excuses cry to Heaven; and there is no one here on earth who knows them better than yourself."

She flashed at him a glance that was positively murderous, but she addressed him in her ordinary business tone.

"I will remind you that my time is valuable," she said. "Let me hear what you have to say."

She opened the black bag, and took out of it a little mass of absorbent cotton in the midst of which I saw a dark object whereat I shuddered.

"You will give me that, and a statement from Mr. Deering?" said he, and he glanced toward me, as being witness of the bargain.

"I will not give them to you for nothing," she said. "You are not the sort of man with whom I care to deal in the dark. If your evidence is valuable I am willing to pay for it, in the manner that you suggest."

"On the evening of this tragedy," said he, "I came to the Eglinton as a result of Miss Warden's letter which

you have seen. In the courtyard, close to the main entrance, I came very near meeting Miss Lockwood, whom I did not recognize until I was within a few feet of her. At the moment I did not think she saw me, but it seems that she did. I entered the hotel, and she went out upon the lower veranda. Very soon afterward, while standing in the passage, which is between the apartment where we now are and the one which would have been Miss Warden's, I saw Miss Lockwood ascending the exterior stairway. I was at the door, looking out through the glass panel. There was no light in the passage except what came from the hall behind me, where only the dim white lamps upon the walls had yet been kindled. I did not wish Miss Lockwood to see me, so I retreated into the passage, and stood there, undecided as to what I should do. A strong current of air, due to the storm, held the door a little way open. I could see out through that narrow slit, and I never for one instant took my eyes off it, until the bright flash came that struck the flagstaff. Mr. Seabury did not pass that door. It is impossible that he should have had any hand in Miss Warden's death."

I felt a sense of lightness. It may be that liquor can produce such pleasant giddiness in the brains of certain men; if that is so, I do not wonder they are drunkards. I heard Mrs. Seabury's voice, seemingly a long way off, say: "That is good, as far as it goes. What else have you?"

"I had been standing in the passage several minutes," he continued. "Immediately after I came, Mr. Seabury went by, in the hall, going toward this room, but he did not notice me. I had heard Miss Warden enter her room, and a moment later some one else came. Subsequently, through the wall, I heard voices."

"Women's voices, both?" asked Mrs. Seabury.

"Yes," he replied. "And then some one went out. I now know that it was Miss Warden, and that she passed into the corner sitting room, which was to have been yours; but, of course, she

did not come within my view, and, at the time, I did not know whether it was she or her visitor who had gone out. I was very much in doubt as to what I should do. I had come too soon; at any moment some member of your party might discover me, and, although my errand was harmless, I desired to avoid being seen. I thought of going out upon the veranda, and should have done so in another moment, if I had not seen Miss Lockwood at the head of the stairs. What happened then I have already told you."

"Well," said Mrs. Seabury, "this is important. Do you realize what you've done, Doctor Clinton?"

Instead of answering, he turned to me, somewhat wildly.

"Seabury," he said, "what do you think of this?"

"I don't know," said I. "My mind is too full of my own salvation. Clinton, there's no mistake here? You're positively certain that I didn't pass that door?"

"Yes," said he. "I am certain."

And with that the real meaning of what he had said began to dawn upon me. I rose from my chair.

"You heard some one in Alice's room?" said I. "Who was it?"

"I did not see her," answered Clinton. "The voices came faintly through the wall. I cannot say who was with Miss Warden. But I infer—"

"That it was Sylvia."

He was silent.

"Do you realize how serious this is?" I demanded. "The presence of a person in that room closes the only path to and from the place of the crime. If you say that Sylvia was there, you accuse her of the murder."

"Seabury," said he, "you must look this thing in the face, just as I was forced to do; and I hope you'll have better courage than I had. The person who was in that room did not go out by way of the hall. I won't say that it was impossible for any one to have opened and closed that door without my hearing the sound of it, but, of course, no human being would have

done it so stealthily. I heard Miss Warden plainly enough, though she made no unusual noise. The obvious fact is, that the person went out by way of the window to the veranda, and if that is so, who must it have been?"

"Sylvia," said I, "on the way to the place where I found her. She went past the window through which the shot was fired. If she did this, it was before Edith came to the head of the stairs—minutes before the crime."

"Then where did the murderer come from?" asked Clinton. "Do you suppose he followed upon Sylvia's heels? That he got into that room without my seeing or hearing him? That he fired the shot in your presence and then returned into that room from which there was not one chance in a million that he could escape unseen? No, no, Seabury; you are well aware of the truth. I understand what you feel. There was a time when I thought Edith was the only person who could by any physical possibility have reached that spot and gone away again, but now—"

"But now you're mistaken, just as you were before," Mrs. Seabury interrupted. "I shall solve the secret of this atrocious deed in a way that will surprise you all. There is no doubt, however, that if Sylvia went to that room, it makes a very dangerous situation for her. Arthur, I think you'd better ask her to come in."

"Just one moment," said I. "Clinton, you believe that it is a choice between Edith and Sylvia, and that all others are excluded."

"There is no longer any question of that kind," said he, and pointed to the bullet on the table. "But let me tell you this; you have invented a story of sleepwalking, in preparation for taking this crime upon yourself. You will go to prison, you will die, if necessary, to save Sylvia from punishment. Show me a way to do as much, and I will do it. I am not indulging in any false heroics; I am perfectly sincere. I cannot sacrifice Edith; but, aside from that, I will go to any length in this matter, break any law, risk any loss of reputation or of liberty, rather

than see Sylvia suffer for this act, if it was hers."

"You would not hold her responsible," said I. "You would think the provocation had exceeded human restraint."

He sat rigid and silent. Mrs. Seabury, holding her chin in the hollow of a hand, viewed him with hatred and contempt. I understood that he had violated the high code of "reliability" in these hints to me as to the gravity of the wrong done to Sylvia's father; he had, in a measure, broken his bargain with Mrs. Seabury. I saw the narrowed spaces of her eyes move upward toward my face, that she might read the effect of Clinton's words.

"Aunty," said I, as quietly and simply as I could, "you understand, of course, that what Doctor Clinton may assert or Sylvia may have heard is not necessarily true. I am far more ready to believe that the truth, when it is known, will reconcile all our differences. As for the implication that Sylvia in a frenzy tried to do you any harm, it makes no impression upon me. We are momentarily confused by a mere trick of circumstances. It is an illusion that affects only our perception; our minds reject it. We seem to see what isn't real, and we know that it isn't."

"Yes," said she. "You have some sense. Now call Sylvia."

I went to the door, and when I opened it, Jack stood outside with his hand raised to knock.

"Jack," said Mrs. Seabury, "bring Sylvia here." And she indicated by a gesture that I should return to my former place. I did so, and we waited in silence until Sylvia and Jack entered.

As soon as they were seated, Mrs. Seabury made a brief, clear statement of all that had occurred, omitting only Clinton's hints. Sylvia and Jack received it as good news; they seemed to see nothing in Clinton's story except the end of all anxiety on my account. They looked to Mrs. Seabury gratefully for what she had done for me, and Sylvia spoke kindly to her.

"I have done this for Arthur because he was worrying," said Mrs. Seabury. "The proceeding is otherwise against my judgment, for I will say frankly that I do not like to have this bullet go out of my possession."

"But my revolver's missing," said Jack. "Everybody speaks of it as the weapon that was used. The papers are full of stories about it."

"In a court," said Mrs. Seabury, "those stories have little weight, but this bullet will be conclusive. Sylvia," she said suddenly, "are you disturbed by this man's story? Were you with Alice in her room?"

"I stood with Alice at the foot of the stairs," said Sylvia. "You were in the office. I waited a few moments, and Alice went up ahead of me and to her own room. I went to mine, and afterward to the veranda. Doctor Clinton does not pretend to know who was with Alice. He heard voices, or perhaps only a voice—her own. She was excited; she may very well have spoken aloud when she was alone."

Mrs. Seabury took some sheets of paper from her bag, and gave one to Clinton and one to Jack.

"You have your pen," said she to Clinton. "Write this:

"At the time when Alice Warden was shot, and for some minutes before and afterward, I stood in the passage which separates the apartment assigned to Miss Warden from that assigned to Arthur Seabury. The door at the end of the passage was ajar. I looked toward that door all the time. No one passed by along the veranda in either direction. It would have been impossible for any person to do so without being seen by me. While standing there, as herein described, I heard a voice, or voices, in Miss Warden's room. I did not recognize the voice or voices. I did not see any one enter or leave that room. If any person was there with Miss Warden, I do not know who it was."

"I heard some one else enter," said Clinton, looking up from his writing.

"You don't know whether you did or not," returned Mrs. Seabury. "You heard the door open and close. You can't swear that Miss Warden didn't do it herself."

"That is true," said Clinton.

"Now, Jack," said Mrs. Seabury, "write what I tell you:

"I know of my own knowledge that neither my revolver nor any other firearm was in my suit case which stood on the table by a window of the room where Alice Warden came to her death, and that my revolver could not have been obtained by any person upon the scene of the murder here referred to."

"Will that be satisfactory to you, Doctor Clinton?" she added.

"Yes," said he.

Mrs. Seabury was now engaged in sealing up the bullet in an envelope, having brought material for this purpose. She looked up from this task to Clinton.

"You'd better take a copy of that affidavit of yours," said she. "You might forget what you've sworn to, and if you do, you'll find it inconvenient."

While Clinton made his copy, Jack went to fetch that serviceable person whom Mrs. Seabury had mentioned, and he came promptly. In his presence the two statements were acknowledged, the contents being hidden from his sight. He took his fee and departed; and a moment later Doctor Clinton took his leave, excited and with an air of having accomplished some important mission. Undoubtedly he seemed to carry Edith's safety in his pocket.

"If Doctor Clinton should produce that bullet, how could he identify it?" I asked.

"That is Doctor Clinton's affair," said Mrs. Seabury, and she arose and left the room, with a little nod to each of us. She knew that she had made a gain with Sylvia, and she would not stay to risk the loss of it.

I was anxious to be alone with Sylvia, and Jack perceived it. We went out, and along the hall toward Sylvia's apartments, but Jack, with some excuse, stopped at his own.

I began to praise Sylvia for the way she had preserved her truce with Mrs. Seabury.

"If it was not you who was with Alice, it was Aunt Frances," said I.

"You must have seen that, but I am mighty glad you didn't make the point. It would only have done harm."

She moved away from me, and then returned suddenly.

"Arthur, it was I," she said. "I wish I had told you before. I begged for your confidence, and all the time I was keeping a secret of my own. And I hardly know why. Did you ever feel, in regard to something, that it couldn't be believed? I have that feeling in regard to this. A kind of shame comes upon me, as if I were about to tell an absolute falsehood, when I try to say that I was in Alice's room, and quarreled with her, and went out by the window, and directly over the place where some one must have stood to fire the shot that killed her! All those things I did, and yet I am innocent. Do you believe me?"

"Surely, Sylvia. How can you doubt it?"

"It seems so monstrous; and yet it is all so perfectly natural. I went to Alice's room, and asked her—begged her—to tell me more about my father. She put me off; she seemed anxious to be rid of me. Of course, I now know why; it was because Doctor Clinton was coming to talk with her of that very subject. Certainly she would wish to wait till she had seen him. She became very nervous, and ran out of the room. A moment later I went out by the window to the veranda, and so to the courtyard side, where I stood by the railing when the lightning fell upon the staff. I spoke unkindly to Alice. Think of it! The last words I said to her were unkind."

A flood of tears rushed to her eyes, and I was moved beyond restraint. I took her in my arms. It seemed to me I had no longer any need of silence. I was now safe; such danger as remained was hers. Beyond question she had exhausted her strength in my defense, and was now ready to change rôles with me and be defended in her turn.

Love is the mother of many strange delusions. I seemed to myself a competent defender; I beheld easy miracles

waiting to be performed by me for Sylvia's benefit. But first I must cleanse my soul by confession, and I told her the story of my life. She forgave me; nay, far worse, she seemed to think I had done right, perhaps because it had been done for her. And in all this interchange about forgiveness we spoke rapidly, as if we had no time. We were impatient, I suppose, for what we knew would follow. The scene—the moment that comes only once—was not disfigured by pretense. She took my love with undisguised and thirsting eagerness.

I think she saw me somewhat as I saw myself in that exalted moment, exaggerated in every kind of excellence till I was fit to be her mate. It seemed that I found just the right things to say, and she to answer. Doubtless we were not eloquent, but we thought we were; and to our own ears our words were in the overtones of human speech, beautiful as the forgotten poetry of dreams, direct as music, sacred as the inspired simplicities of hymns upon the lips of true believers.

Not even Jack's fancy could have seen more rainbows in the heavens than I saw when I returned to my own room after that episode of heaven. I was prepared to face any foe, and to rejoice in any fight. The world was all made over, and a new roof set above it.

On my table I found a sheet of paper with these words in Jack's hastiest hand:

Come to aunty's room. I'm told the devil is to pay. But I guess it's all right.

I thought of a thousand things, and tried to choose the least of them for my belief. Had there been some crash in our pecuniary affairs, and had the knowledge come to Mrs. Seabury at this late hour of the night? I hoped that it was nothing worse.

In the hall, I looked down upon the top of Cushing's hat as he was hurrying down the stairs. The sight filled me with foreboding, and Jack's face, when I entered Mrs. Seabury's room, seemed to confirm the worst, whatever

it might be. Never had I seen the man making such heroic struggles against panic.

"What is it, aunty?" I gasped.

"It's very unfortunate," said she. "Clinton has been arrested."

"Arrested! For what?"

"Some form of complicity, I suppose," said she. "I haven't got the facts. One of Quinn's men took him, as he was leaving this hotel. He's at the station now, and I guess he'll have to stay there for the night, though I'm trying to bail him out. The worst of it is that they've got that bullet, and the statements. It will cost a pretty penny to straighten *this* out, if I'm any prophet."

"And yet," said Jack, "it's best, in a way. Clinton will get out of it all right, and as for the bullet, why, the

fact is that Quinn ought to have had it in the first place. I like Quinn," he added, looking from one to the other of us with a fine defiance; "he's a good man, honest and able. I'll admit that I wouldn't have cared to see Arthur forced to his defense against such awful odds. I was willing, then, to hide any evidence that might crop out. But now that he is safe, I'm ready to fight in the open. We're all innocent. What are we afraid of?"

"This will be very bad for Sylvia," said Mrs. Seabury. "But I will save her. You must tell her so, both of you. But not to-night; to-morrow will do for that."

She folded her hands upon the desk, and looked between Jack and me at the opposite wall with eyes that were two thin, straight lines.

TO BE CONTINUED.



In the River Meadows

THE breeze blows over the tasseled grass,
With the sound of laughter and lyric dream;
And gleeful lisplings and whispers pass
Where the field slopes down to the long blue stream.

From her starry chalice the night has poured
Clear wine of dew for an airy feast,
And the dawn her splendor of light upstored
Showers over them from the crystal east.

Loveliest thoughts in these meadows dwell,
Gossamer fancies and iris hopes;
And a matin fellowship weaves its spell
In Orient blossoms and ivied slopes.

All the winds that are chanting here
In dell and dingle are blithe and young,
And there's music meant for a listening ear
Where the hyacinth's wild blue bells are swung.

Bring here a heart that is clean and sweet,
And win the blessing that waits for you;
For here are the prints of the angels' feet,
As in Eden's bowers when the world was new.

—L. M. MONTGOMERY.



A Tale of Shipwreck

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAVER

Of all the cooks that ever done
The job to tickle Tallyrand
That same was Mr. Alec Bunn,
Upon the good ship *Sally Rand*.

En casserole such rich *ragout*
Most sailors never meet in time;
Such fricandeau au jus! The crew
Could hardly wait till eatin' time.

And when they smacked his *sauce pa fait*
They vowed his food was "corkin' greens,"
And wildly shouted: "*S'il vous plaît,*
Un petit gout de pork and beans!"

Now, on that ship the toughest snipe
That ever bashed a binnacle
Was good old Captain Thomas Tripe,
A weathered tar, and cynical.

So up he spoke to Alec Bunn:
"I'm tired o' fancy skittles, sir.
A sailor, when his work is done,
Wants plain New England vittles, sir."

Replied the cook: "On pancakes greased
Perhaps the vulgar rabble dote;
But *your* picked crew requires at least
An ordinary *table d'hôte*."

"Pooh!" said the tar, "when I was young
We lived on pork and blubber, too.
In shipwrecks I have often clung
To spars, and nibbled rubber, too."

"In them days——" Here his speech was checked
By quite a dreadful jamboree;
In fact the *Sally Rand* was wrecked
Upon the isle of Wambo-ree.

This desert isle, it seems, was stocked
With fruits and herbs and subtle fish;
Fat quail upon the hillsides flocked,
The streams were full of cuttle-fish.

And Runn, the cook, was wild with joy
To see this happy rookery,
And quickly started to employ
His chosen trade of cookery.

The crew grew fatter day by day,
Fed by each forest denizen;
And torpid on the beach they lay
Stuffed with delicious venison.

But only Captain Thomas Tripe
He sat upon the rocks alone.
He scorned the food: he smoked his pipe,
And darned his simple socks alone.

His wild eyes yearned with hungry gleam
For some New England beanery,
As babbling in a fever dream
He vaguely scanned the scenery.

Each noon, the sailors madly becked
And signs of luncheon signified.
He said: "French vittles when you're wrecked
Are foolish and undignified."

"In youth, when I was wrecked like this,
I lived on pork and blubber, too;
I ate my hat with smiles of bliss,
And gnawed my boots of rubber, too.

"For it ain't right that shipwrecked tars
Should feed like gluttons chronic-oh,
A-loafin' round with black cigars
And pastry from Delmonico.

"One time, when wrecked, in mad despair
The second mate I carved to death—
Ere Tripe could tell this sad affair
He, fortunately, starved to death.

So on his tomb they wrote: "T. T.,
A Tar who was Invincible;
He lived on Pork and Piety
And Perished for a Principle."

In seven months the crew, a score,
Was rescued from that cookin' sir,
And when at last they got to shore
Folks said: "How well you're lookin', sir.



THE MEETING HOUSE THAT WENT A-RAMPAGING



BY HOLMAN F. DAY

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

ON his way to serve special venires in a distant part of the county, High Sheriff Aaron Sproul passed through a remote section of his "barony"—the town of Soperville. He traveled by team, Hiram Look having volunteered as companion and charioteer. A beating fall rainstorm did not serve to enhance Soperville's doubtful attractions.

"If anything ever happened in this town except weather changes crossing over to get to some place that's worth while," stated Mr. Look, who had been staring ahead along a dismal stretch of muddy road, "it ain't set down in any history I ever read, nor marked by monymments erected by proud and enterprisin' citizens."

Cap'n Sproul agreed by grunting something. The only sounds were made by the "pluck-pluck" of the horse's hoofs in the mud and by the tattoo of the rain on the leather top of the carriage.

"I never get into a town like this but I feel like blowin' up the town hall by dynamite, or cuffin' a deacon's ears, just to give 'em something to talk about except crops and squash bugs," Hiram went on, after finding the silence dreary.

The next instant he jumped in his seat at sound of a real Comanche yell behind him, took startled survey

through the rain-smeared glass of the back curtain, and promptly steered his astonished horse into the ditch. Cap'n Sproul did not have time to ask questions.

A queer turn-out splashed its noisy way past them. The horse was galloping. His splay feet threw a rain of mud. He drew a sort of box on wheels. In spite of the mud that smeared it, the box displayed that it was painted red, white, and blue, in stripes. A small United States flag fluttered from its top. The driver was concealed, but a lashing whip told that he was present and busy. Lettered on the back was this legend: "Rural Free Delivery, No. 3."

"They certainly do hand mails along to 'em in an enterprisin' way in this town," said the cap'n, getting his voice after his jolt in the ditch.

"And they run funerals on an up-to-date plan," Hiram informed him. He had been looking back through the glass.

There was another rattle of wheels. A hearse flashed past; the big bay horse that hauled it pounded along at a desperate run.

Hiram Look, Cap'n Sproul, and the steed that drew them remained motionless and stared after this spectacle.

"I've owned, operated, and run chariot races in my time," said the

old showman, "but I never thought of matchin' a hearse and a mail wagon. All I can say is, I'll take back some of what I've remarked about Soper-ville. They've got sportin' blood in town—and my money goes on the hearse."

The man on its seat had stood up. Gray whiskers streamed back past his ears. He began to stripe the big bay.

Apparently the big bay had a link or two of speed that he had not let out. He leaped forward, and the wheels of the hearse, a massive, old-fashioned job of vehicle building, crashed against its lighter rival. The hearse went on triumphantly. The mail cart crumpled down on its side, two wheels crushed. The panting horse was anchored by the wreck.

When the sheriff and Hiram arrived abreast, a man was just getting his head up through the little door at the side of the box. He continued to twist himself up and out, a slim, elongated slab of a man, until one began to wonder how so much length had contrived to crowd itself into such a narrow box. white hair, long mustaches, and a goatee like a horn; and Cap'n Sproul reflected that the emerging of this figure from the box reminded him of pictures of the sea serpent he had seen.

"I call on you for witnesses," squealed the stranger. "You see him do it. I put you under bonds right here and now to witness for me. He's goofered my cart. He's insulted the flag. He's piled the United States mail in the ditch. It's treason. I want you to witness it!"

"You needn't get excited about it—we see it," stated Hiram. "But before we begin to referee this thing, we want to know what the race was for—champeenship of Soper-ville, peck of oats, or to see whether the mail contract should be let to the hearse. If latter, you lose. Looks as though funerals could deliver telegrams in this town—say nothin' of mails."

"And I f'it in the war, and I'm proud of my record," the man went on. He had uncoiled himself from the box and

was out on the ground. "There's the kind of a man I be when it comes to patri'tism." He pointed at the red, white, and blue cart.

"Well, what do you want us to do?" snapped the high sheriff, impatient at this circumlocution. "Give three cheers for the gover'munt or pass resolutions? What's your name?"

"Bunker Pitts."

"What are you out here on the highway, runnin' a race with a hearse for? Now don't you go to wanderin' off on a tangent. I'm sheriff of this county. Answer me plain, and answer me straight."

"Sheriff, hey? Then you're the right man come to the right place. I order you to go arrest Alvaredo B. Dockum, and that's him that just run me down. I order you to do it—understand? I'm an officer of this government. I represent the United States. Alvaredo B. Dockum, that's the man! And you'll find him up there—up there at the Union meeting house, where he thinks he's got me coopered on property, after runnin' my wheels off'm me. I order you to arrest. I'm United States!" He pointed to his mail cart.



"I order you to arrest. I'm United States!"

"Are you goin' to tell me the whys and wherefores of this thing?" the sheriff demanded tartly.

"I just order you to do your duty, that's all," barked Mr. Pitts, not moderating his frenzy. "I ain't got time for no whys nor wherefores, not now. You do your duty. I've got mine to do, and that's to deliver the United States mail." He ran his head back into the little door and began to rummage.

The sheriff leaned out and gazed at him from under knotted brows.

"What's the good of foolin' time on that angleworm?" inquired Hiram. "He ain't in his right wits, so far as I can see."

Mr. Pitts pulled himself out of his hole, his hands full of letters.

"You've got your orders. United States is givin' 'em off through me. I've told you where he is." He directed a pipe-stem finger at a square building that loomed on a neighboring hilltop. "You go arrest. When I've attended to my government duties, you'll get further orders." He ducked his head under cover again.

"I've played peekaboo with that tin flute about as long's I want to," the sheriff informed Hiram. "Drive on!"

They proceeded. The highway led them past the building on the hill. The hearse had been backed into a little building at its side. The larger structure was plainly a meeting house. It was old and weather-streaked, and its tower was canted with a rakish cock that seemed out of place in one so old. On the broad steps sat the whiskered man of the victorious hearse. He gazed at them silently and grimly. He had a double-barreled gun across his knees.

"Another lunatic. Keep goin'," advised Cap'n Sproul. But Hiram, with the showman's ready curiosity in anything freakish, steered the horse into the yard.

"What do you expect to find out from a critter that's run a race in a hearse and is now sittin' guardin' an old meetin' house with a gun?" the cap'n demanded.

"You may know law, and you may not," volunteered the man on the steps. "But I can tell you that possession is nine points of it. You may be enemies, you may be friends; but I'm informin' you direct and to the point that I ain't goin' to stand triflin' of any kind." The rain beat upon his face and trickled from his beard. "I'm here, and notice is posted."

On a sheet of brown paper, protected by the lintel of the broad door from the rain, was scrawled:

"Trespass at Your Peril. Per order of Pewholders."

"I'm the pewholders," explained the guardian.

"Crazier'n a tick," growled the sheriff. "Drive ahead!"

"You may be biased, or you may be fair," went on the sentinel. "But I call on you to witness that he got in my way. I call on you to witness that I got my notice up first. And I'm here protectin' it till I have shown that possession is—"

"Say, look-a-here, Brother What's-your-name—" interrupted Hiram.

"Dockum—Dockum's my name."

"Dockum, as you say! We've just come away from that jointed carpenter's rule, down there in the road, decidin' that he was crazy. Now, my friend, here, is high sheriff of this county. If you don't want to be pulled up and put in a horsepitte, you get down to cases and talk sense. What's this chariot racin' mean, and what's up in this town?"

"Them in authority shall be answered accordin'," stated Mr. Dockum politely. "He's tryin' to gaffle onto what don't belong to him."

"You mean old Stars and Stripes, that we met down the road, there?" Hiram inquired.

"Meanin' Bunker Pitts, and that's him! His father give the land that this buildin' sets on, and mine give the buildin'. And now he says because public worship has been quit here, the land and the buildin' on it, includin' hearse, revert to him. I've bought up interests of pewholders, and I say



He gazed at them silently and grimly.

buildin's belong to me. I'm here to protect 'em. And I've hurried back from a funeral to do it. He was goin' to post legal papers, but I heard of it in time. And them is facts, gents."

Hiram surveyed him and the weather-beaten structure with interest. "Well," he vouchsafed, at last, "if your man Pitts ain't a quitter I can see where this has got the makin's of quite a steady job for you, uncle. Dependin' on shootin' your grub as it flies over, or will you have your meals brought to you?"

"Possession is nine points of the law," stated Mr. Dockum, "and solemn thought is givin' me another point, makin' ten. And when details are thought out I shall act. In the meantime, I'm guardin' and protectin'."

Cap'n Sproul had listened without interest.

"Refreshin' and high-class business for two grown men to be puttin' mind and effort on," he commented disgustedly. "Poke up that hoss and let's be movin'!"

But Hiram, leaning from the carriage to see whether there was any prospect of Mr. Pitts arriving to thicken the plot at that time, noticed a chunky little horse making its way up the hill, hauling a broad-bellied phaeton. A chunky little woman drove, and while the old showman was expostulating with the impatient sheriff, she turned in at the meeting-house yard.

"A pretty mess of scandal you are stirring up in the village, you two fools," she declared to Mr. Dockum, without preface. "Claiming and wrangling and pull-hauling over this sacred place that my father preached in till the saints called him to the higher sphere! It's enough to make your own fathers turn over in their graves."

Mr. Dockum grew pink above his whiskers, and put his gun behind him. She stepped out of the carriage and went past him to the meeting-house door. She tore down the paper he had posted.

"You go along home to your truck wagon, Al Dockum."

She put her foot against his back and pushed him off the steps. He did not resist. But it was plain, even to the rather blunted perception of Hiram Look, that it was some other emotion than fear that mastered him.

"Uncle Rug-face is stuck on the sofy-pillow lady," he muttered in the cap'n's ear. "He's layin' down and rollin' over for her."

"It ain't fair for you to help him steal it away from me," the dislodged guardian whined.

"Steal?" she demanded. "Do you dare to stand there and use that word to me?"

"What else is it?" he persisted. "Now that there ain't any more meetin's here he says the whole thing is his, buildin' and all. And my father built this meetin' house, and I've bought up the rest of the pewholders."

"Understand from me that meetings here are *not* discontinued. My father preached in this hallowed place all his life. I'm not going to see it desecrated. Meetings will be resumed at once."

"Who's goin' to preach?"

"I am."

He looked at her for a time and then turned and took the two strangers in the carriage into his confidence.

"It's a dodge, gents, and I want you to bear witness to it. I've been abused to the limit, and I ain't goin' to keep my mouth closed any longer. There's things back of all this. I don't care who knows it. Let the world begin and talk about it now. We was goin' to be married once. And that human caterpillar down there in the road lied about me and got her to break it off, and now he's courtin' her, and she's goin' in with him on a deal to rob me."

"You're a mean, miserable liar!" exploded the stout lady.

"I ain't," he retorted, childish in his jealous fury that was now plainly bursting from long restraint. "I've stood it, meek and mild, and now I'm goin' to rage like the lion. What he told to you to break it off was all plumb lies. I stood it. But now that you've gone in with him to steal what's mine, I ain't goin' to stand it."

Her face was crimson with shame and anger. Until then, in her absorption in the business she had come on, she had been partly unmindful of the unknown men in the carriage. She turned her head away to avoid their frankly inquisitive gaze.

"It was bad enough to ship me for a critter like Bunk Pitts," Mr. Dockum went on, seeking sympathy from them, as man with men, "but if any one had ever told me that Naphalia Treat would ever help him play a game like this on me I'd have knocked his teeth down his throat."

"Al Dockum," she stormed, "you

have disgraced me before people who will carry a mess of lies out of this town. If I wasn't the daughter of a clergyman I would fill you with buckshot out of that gun of yours. But you'll suffer for this."

"I have suffered for fifteen years, since he stole you away. I had your bounden promise, and I'm goin' to stand right out here and say I had. And you let a lie split it all off. I ain't got anything to conceal any more. I'm

goin' to let the world know. You listen to my side, gents, and then let her tell hers, if she wants to. Give in your judgment. I'm willin' to leave it all out to a referee, and you are as good as any. Now, I—"

Cap'n Sproul jerked the reins out of the hands of Hiram, whom he had vainly urged to start, and who now had settled himself to listen.

They were a quarter of a mile down the muddy highway, their horse at a brisk canter, before Hiram managed to wrest the reins from the sheriff's clutch, and the cap'n let go then only because the struggle threatened to steer the horse into the ditch.

"You try to turn that hoss 'round to go back there," stated the sheriff icily, "and I'll kick you out of this carriage."

Hiram knew that tone. He went on. But rancor gnawed within him.

"It improves some things to pickle 'em," he observed, after a time. "Tripe, for instance. But pickled human feelin's is different. You went to sea too long."

"If you're still achin' to umpire that jawin' match back there, hop out and run back," retorted the sheriff. "As for me, I can find trouble without ad-



She tore down the paper he had posted.

vertisin' for it. I'm goin' on and attend to my own business."

Hiram continued to drive on, but conversation stopped. His natural inquisitiveness had been hurt in a tender spot. He had been jerked out of a romance at just the moment it had begun to titillate.

For the next two days, through a pelting rainstorm that had apparently settled into an everlasting downpour, the sheriff pursued his quarry with his documents, and Hiram served as charioteer—a sullen and disgusted companion. The weather helped to keep him ugly. On his return trip, he steered back through Soperville. Unsatisfied curiosity led him. He reflected that he might be in time to get another look-in on the muddled affairs of Pitts, Dockum, and Miss Naphthalia Treat. If Cap'n Sproul noticed the course they were taking, he made no comment. And Hiram kept his intentions to himself.

Even Cap'n Aaron Sproul's contemptuous indifference to the troubles of the Soperville trio was not proof against the surprise that awaited him on the top of Meeting House Hill.

The old meeting house was gone. His first startled glance searched for ashes. There were none. The foundation stones were not blackened.

"Well, I swear!" Hiram gasped. "Puttin' a meetin' house in your pocket and walkin' off with it is something beyond my cal-lations!"

The hoof-trampled sod and the upheaval of the muddy road told the story. Details were furnished by a rain-drenched farmer, who came jogging past just then, and whose air of deep gloom did not lighten when Hiram hailed him.

"What's been happenin' here?" the old showman demanded.

"Hell and destruction and worse to come," replied the sullen citizen. He was going to drive on, but Hiram halted him with peremptory command.

"I don't know what business it is of strangers passin' through," growled the farmer. "It ain't no pleasant subject."

"This here is the high sheriff," stated Hiram, "and if there's been trouble he wants to know about it."

"High sheriff, hey?" The man's interest perked a bit, but he scowled at the cap'n. "He'd better be 'tendin' to business where he can be reached instead of skyhootin' off to nowhere when he's been wanted in this town as bad as he has the past few days. He was telefoamed and telefoamed to, till the wires was busted down by them rampagin' shadeyes. And because he didn't get here, there it is down there now, and business plugged tighter'n Judas Iscar'ot's ear at the last trump!"

"What's down where, and what's plugged?"

"Go see," replied the farmer, jerking up his horse's head and preparing to start. "I ain't in the spirit to talk and tell, and a high sheriff ain't any good to us now, unless he's brought old Goliah with him, to lift the thing off'n that bridge."

But Hiram shouted further orders, that impressed even that sulky subject. Furthermore, he wheeled their carriage across the road, and blocked it.

"Well, if you've got to know, and I can't get past to do my chores till you do know," growled their captive, "Bunk Pitts and Al Dockum left off fightin' over old maid Treat and went at it over this meetin' house. And Bunk got the Grand Army in with him, Grand Army reckonin' to use it for a hall if it stayed here; and Al got the Odd Fellers in with him, Odd Fellers goin' to use it for a hall if it was moved onto Al's lot down in the village. And there was two bees got up, and we had civil war. And the Odd Feller bee licked because they was younger and there was more of 'em, and they h'isted the meetin' house onto skids and run it down the hill on this greasy goin' with a string of oxen and hosses; and the most of 'em was pretty well set up with hard cider and thought they could up-end it or something over Valley Brook bridge right in the village; and there she hangs with the telefoam wires busted down and nobody can't cross to get groceries,

and law and order in this town gone to blazes, and old maid Treat takin' her life in her hands and standin' there in the meetin' house, and preachin' one of her father's old sermons, and sayin' that public worship ain't been discontinued, and that the law will be took on them that moved it—and she rode all the way down the hill in it, preachin' all the time. Now, them's facts, and all of them. I s'pose, now, after I dance a jig, tell a story, and sing a song, you'll let me pass on about my own business."

Hiram, considerably dazed by that outpouring of news, pulled aside, and the farmer passed, sawing on his reins.

"This seems to be a genteel town, take it in a rainy spell," said Cap'n Sproul.

"Seein' that there's trouble ahead, I reckon you'll want to turn around and go back some other way," suggested Hiram, trying to be meekly obliging, and failing to hide the taunt. "I mean, the bridge is plugged," he hastened to add, for Cap'n Sproul's demeanor suddenly grew menacing.

"That course is pretty plain, ain't it?" demanded the sheriff, darting directing finger at the hoof-marks. "Well, you tack into that road and follow it."

The bridge, the village, and the vagabond meeting house were revealed at the first turn of the highway. The three were like antagonists, helpless in a clinch. The bridge was one small arch of rocks spanning a rushing flood. The attempt to slide the old meeting house across on shored timbers had been bungled by the excited volunteers. The structure was wedged and immovable. Telephone poles had been broken off. On either side of the torrent stood the massed population of Soperville, shouting recriminations at each other.

"That's a nice kind of a vener'ble, sacred tramp to be staggerin' around town, now, ain't it?" inquired a disgusted old gentleman whom Hiram accosted on his arrival at the scene. "I says to 'em just now, set fire to it. A meetin' house that has backslid ain't to be considered for what it has been. But there's Naphthalia Treat in there,



"Standin' there in the meetin' house, and preachin' one of her father's old sermons."

with an armful of her father's sermons, readin' 'em, and sayin' that public worship ain't been discontinued, and defyin' any one to touch her or the meetin' house. There's probably quite a legal query about it, but we ain't got any lawyer to set us right."

"The boys is gettin' recklesser every minute," stated another citizen. "There ain't any knowin' what will be done. There ain't been a hoorah over anything in this town for a good many years, and towns that have been supple and soave a long time do certainly kick up when they bust their halter rope. There's two sides, and there's hard feelin's, and threats have been made."

The high sheriff of Cuxabexis was no longer indifferent or uncertain. Official duty had presented itself. He grappled with it.

"Where's there a man named Dockum—or Pitts?" he demanded.

"They're head ringleaders, they're in-

side," volunteered a bystander. "I was in a minute ago. Bunk is tryin' to coax her to come out and Al is settin' in a pew, representin' pewholders, I reckon. She'd better be got out. I've been hearin' rumors." His tone was ominous.

The door of the meeting house was not available. It overhung the flood. But a plank leaned against the sill of a window, from which sash and glass had been shattered. Cap'n Sproul, with a seaman's nimbleness in climbing, shinned up and entered.

He saw Mr. Dockum first. The discarded lover sat in a pew near the window by which the sheriff had entered.

He had his arms folded, and bent stern and gloomy gaze on the two persons on the pulpit stand. Miss



He was haif way up the ladder when Cap'n Sproul arrived and yanked him down.

Treat was reading from a manuscript, defiantly and doggedly. She had set out to reestablish the legal status of the old place of worship and was beginning on the third sermon, in order that there might be no question regarding preaching service in the Soperville Union meeting house. Mr. Pitts was in front of the pulpit, daring occasionally to raise his voice in supplication and warning. It was plain that Mr. Pitts had something on his mind that troubled him greatly.

"I tell ye, Nappy," he squealed, continuing his entreaties, "it ain't safe to stay here. This thing has gone fur, but it's goin' further. They've got the bits in their teeth, and they're runnin' away."

"I call on you to witness," hissed Mr. Dockum, sliding the length of the pew to get near the sheriff's ear, "that he's knowin' to a plot. I've been listenin' to him. He's lighted the fuse of this bomb, and now he can't stomp it out."

"You're stayin' in here at the risk of life and limb," urged Pitts frantically. "If you don't come of your own will I'm goin' to lug you out." He went up the pulpit steps.

"You lay finger on me when I'm doing my duty as I see it," she declared, "and I'll have you peeking through bars for the rest of your life."

"I see my duty, too, and I'm goin' to do it." He was twitching the sleeves up his long arms.

"The time for you to attend to your duty was when they were stealing this sacred building, and you stood around as helpless as a tallow candle and let 'em do it."

"Their bee was four to one against our bee," he pleaded.

"A man that can't protect a meetin' house and his own property can't protect a woman," was her taunt. "I'm all done with you."

"That's the talk," applauded Mr. Dockum. "I reckoned you'd find him out."

"He's only a fool, but you're Beelzebub himself," she cried, with a glance that made Mr. Dockum cower. "It's a wonder the heavens don't strike you with their lightnings."

The voice of the high sheriff drowned out their complainings.

"This joint debate stands adjourned," he roared. "I arrest you two men for ringleaders of a riot. Miss Treat, if that's your name, you'd better go home. It ain't no fit job for a lady to be ridin' around town in a meetin' house."

Hiram Look had hitched his horse at a safe distance from the bridge, and now came up the plank, and entered.

"Aaron," he said, "there's a lot of buzzin' in them bees out there. Something is bein' meditated. You'd better get out." He gazed with interest on Miss Treat, at bay in the pulpit, noted the plain anguish of Mr. Pitts, and gave Dockum an appreciative wink. "You may win out yet, uncle," he suggested. "But I'll bet you dollars to doorknobs that you'll never pull the weddin' off in this meetin' house. She's spoke for, if I'm any judge."

Impelled by his characteristic spirit of investigation, he marched down the centre aisle and into the little vestibule that overhung the swollen flood. Pitts broke off in his appeals to the stubborn lady in the pulpit and ran toward the vestibule.

"Don't you ring that bell!" he shouted.

"Why, so there *is* a bell!" remarked Hiram cheerfully, grabbing at the rope.

"Don't you ring that bell!" Pitts' command had a note of frenzy in it. He attempted to yank the rope away from Hiram. That gentleman thrust him away vigorously.

"Don't you think I'm over ten, Uncle Pitts?" he inquired sarcastically. "Who told you that you could order me around?" He surged on the rope. "Let's see what kind of a tone she's got."

The little bell in the tower clanged. Hiram held the agonized Mr. Pitts off

by kicking at him, and rang the bell with all his might.

"Oh, sweet, merciful, sufferin', wall-eyed Sancho!" screamed the remonstrator. "He's gone and done it, spite of all I could do." He flung himself into the big room. "Run! Get out! She's a-comin'!"

A mighty shock shook them. The old building swayed and quivered. It settled with grating of the falling rocks of the bridge. But even in their consternation they realized that what had shaken them was at some distance.

"He's give the signal!" yelled Mr. Pitts, running up the aisle toward the window. "I tried to stop him, but the old fool went and done it. I've warned you and warned you. Peril of your lives! Get out!"

But the sheriff seized him before he could escape from the window. The building was at rest once more, and Cap'n Sproul did not realize what had happened. And he did not propose to let a prisoner escape until he understood the circumstances better. He tripped the struggling captive and shook him about until he surrendered, squatting on hands and knees. And when the cap'n cuffed him, to settle his wits, he yelped the information that the gates of the old dam above had been blown up and that the ringing of the bell was to be the signal that he would give as soon as he had coaxed Miss Treat out of the doomed building.

"And we had a right to wash it off'in this bridge, where it was blockin' trav'el," added Mr. Pitts, attempting justification even in the hour of chaos. He bleated that much, lying where the sheriff tossed him the moment he realized the plight they were in.

Bedlam was loose without. They heard the shouts of warning and the tumult of the rushing waters. The willing helpers at the dam had done their job promptly and effectively on hearing Hiram's untoward signal. The subduing of Mr. Pitts had taken only seconds of the time and attention of those within the building, but already the swelling waters had cut them off from shore on both sides. Water be-

gan to pour in at the windows. The massed citizens were running wildly up the banks, seeking safety. It was plain that the plotters had taken most of them by surprise. The quintette in the meeting house had been abandoned to their fate. Mr. Pitts, turning back from his desperate resolve to leap from a window and swim for it, glared back at the others with a courage born of despair.

"I warned ye, and he done it!" he declared, accusing Hiram. "It was planned and planned all careful, and you wouldn't go out yourselves, and you held me back."

"You're a vile assassin," shrilled Miss Treat, from the pulpit. "But I can die as the daughter of a minister should die. There are no sins on my soul." She tucked the bundle of sermons under her arm, and sat down in the pulpit chair with fortitude and serenity that steadied Cap'n Sproul's whirling thoughts as he gazed on her.

"We ain't goin' to die," he shouted, to hearten them.

But Mr. Dockum was first in expedients. He knew the resources of the old meeting house. The disgrace of the hated Pitts seemed to put the rival in fine fettle.

"Up to the tower!" he shouted. "Up into the tower! There's a ladder!" He ran to Miss Treat. "I'll carry your bundle of sermons," he said. "They're precious, but they ain't so precious as you be. You go ahead. I'll help boost

you." And she hurried to the vestibule with him in confidence that warmed his heart.

In his panic, Mr. Pitts had forgotten the ladder. At Dockum's first words he began to leap over the pews with the agility of a grasshopper. His long legs and his fears helped him on. He was first into the vestibule and was halfway up the ladder when Cap'n Sproul arrived and yanked him down, leaping and clutching a foot in each hand.

"Ladies first, you whelp!" stormed the cap'n, in the tone of the shipboard autocrat.

Miss Treat ascended. Mr. Pitts made another leap, but Hiram cuffed him to one side and took his turn. The water was waist deep, and Mr. Pitts went under when he fell, and came up strangling. He tried to crowd past Mr. Dockum, but that gentleman dealt him a buffet that sent him under again. When he gained the foot of the ladder once more Cap'n Sproul was there.

"Shipboard rules says 'Passengers first,'" gritted the cap'n, "but that don't include rats. You stay back."

He kicked Mr. Pitts away, and went up. And before the dazed Mr. Pitts followed, he looked around apprehensively, to make sure that he was not getting in the way of any other violent refugee.

The old dam was now discharging its full volume, and the fall rains had filled it to the brim. The little group in the open tower saw nothing to re-



He clung there, wailing after them.

assure them. Yeasty waters frothed above and below. The valley was filling rapidly. The shores of safety were receding every moment. Balanced on what was left of the bridge stones, the old meeting house began to rock in the current.

"It's up killick and off with us!" stated Cap'n Sproul, with mariner's prescience. Then, with the grim humor of one whom perils by water could not dismay, he clanged the tower bell. "All ashore that's goin' ashore!" he shouted. And then the old building heaved, groaned, and started.

"She's a-goin' like the devil owed her four dollars!" gasped Hiram, getting his feet after the first dizzying whirl.

Once settled in the flood, and after it had raked away the obstructions that held it, the old meeting house gave promise of performing creditable duty as a craft. But Cap'n Sproul, beginning to stride to and fro in the narrow confines of the tower, with the regulation pendulum gait of the skipper on watch, stared up into the gray sky helplessly.

"Nothin' aloft, nothin' aloft!" he complained. "Not a chance to rig as much as a jury mast. This beats all my ever goin' to sea."

Pitts crouched in a corner, face to the flooring, squawking feebly, like a wounded fowl. But Dockum had risen to the occasion. He stood with his arm around the waist of Miss Napthalia Treat, and that lady clung to him, in her abandon of terror, with a violence that appeared to afford Mr. Dockum peculiar comfort.

"Now, don't you worry," Mr. Dockum assured her. "My father built this old meetin' house, and he put good stuff into it. Don't you get scared. We're comin' out all right. Hewed timbers, double-pinned and riveted, and all of punkin pine, tight and right and light. We'll swim her out, Nappy, and don't you get into despair."

They struck, canted precariously, and the old building cartwheeled along on its corners. The five were thrown off their feet, and fell on the floor of the

tower. By a sort of poetic justice, the prostrate form of Mr. Pitts broke the impact of Miss Treat and her defender. He turned blue and convulsed features up to Miss Treat before that lady had found strength to arise from her involuntary cushion.

"Oh, Miss Napthalia," he groaned, abject in his terror, "we're a-goin' to die and be ushered into heaven."

Hiram Look was endeavoring to re-erect the crown of his smashed plug hat.

"I don't want to be disgraced before the angel band when my record is read out," mourned Mr. Pitts. "I want to stand with 'em, too."

"An angel!" sneered Hiram. "Fit you out with wings and you'll look like a devil's darnin' needle. You make me sick! Shut up!"

"I ain't goin' into heaven with it on my soul," went on Pitts, writhing out from under Miss Treat, and oblivious to all but her. "It wa'n't so what I told you. I lied about Al Dockum. He wa'n't courtin' her on the sly who I said he was courtin'. He wa'n't payin' no attentions. I wish all them was here that I've lied to," he added, as the meeting house gave another sickening lurch. "I want to go into heaven right."

"Tophet, and the kitchen end of it, at that, is too good for you," bawled Mr. Dockum. Even in the stress of circumstances that surrounded them, he was plainly making preparations to chastise his rival there and then, but the cap'n held him off.

"Ladies present, Dockum!" he protested. "Remember your manners."

"But I shan't rest easy in my grave unless I lick him before I go there," protested the rival. "And we ain't goin' in to get out of this alive."

The meeting house, careering around a bend in the flooded stream, was now indulging in terrifying antics. There were towering elms, isolated in the flood, against which they bumped. They struck hidden objects that kept them flying about in the confines of the tower like corns in a popper.

Cap'n Sproul, more accustomed to a

tossing deck than the others, managed to stand and keep lookout. The valley had broadened, and the building was swimming in a greater expanse of waters. As though driven by some malicious agency, it seemed to zigzag on purpose to bump trees.

"This thing is Jonahed, surer'n a sculpin's got tushes," he growled.

"I've done other things," went on Mr. Pitts, in forlorn confession. "It ain't so about my war record. I lied to get my pension. The United States gover'munt ain't here to hear my confession. But you are here, Nappy, and you ain't forgive me for lyin' to you."

"I can't stand any more piccolo soloin' on that tune," Hiram remarked to the cap'n. "Help me gag him!"

"I know something better," returned the sheriff, who had been cocking observant eyes to right and left. The valley narrowed below, and the meetin' house was rapidly approaching drooping trees. "Catch a-holt of him with me!" He caught the prostrate Mr. Pitts by the leg and collar, and Hiram followed suit with alacrity on the other side. He did not require explanations.

"The starboard tree, there!" panted the cap'n. "Toss him high, lofty, and all together!"

When they launched him in air, Pitts sped, with a yell, like some gigantic bird, and landed safely in the thick

branches. He clung there, wailing after them.

"That tree is safer than a floatin' meetin' house," observed Cap'n Sproul placidly. "We've done two good jobs. We've saved a human life, and got rid of a Jonah."

Their immediate adventures seemed

to justify the last part of the cap'n's observation. They rushed down through the gorge, safely uplifted on the toss of the waters, and drifted out upon shallows, where broad fields had received the flood. The dam had discharged its volume suddenly. The waters subsided as rapidly. The old meeting house grounded, swung against a knoll, and was stationary.

"Well," sighed Cap'n Sproul, hanging out over the tower rail, and squinting critically at his anchorage and surroundings, "considerin' that we cruised off before we was rigg'd, victualled, or chandlere'd, hadn't any charts and darned poor hands before the mast, we've done a pretty fair job of it."

"You've done better than what you realize," cried Mr. Dockum. "This here is the intervalle on my farm, and I'd like to see the shape and size of the critter that will dash to move this meetin' house off'm my land."

"It does seem as though Providence had been moving in this matter and showing the way," ventured Miss



Miss Treat stretched up her chubby form on tiptoe to meet him.

Treat, who now dared to stand up and gaze abroad.

"It's brought out the truth and brought us safe to land," agreed Mr. Dockum, "and if it only brings something else, which will be best of all, I reckon I'll never gainsay Providence again."

"You two better get married," counseled Cap'n Sproul bluntly. "Folks that go stubbin' around the world unhitched at your age are bound to tumble into scrapes of one kind or another. This, here, is a sample."

"I've been willin' a good many years," said Mr. Dockum, with simple wistfulness.

"What do you say to callin' it a trade, and makin' it bindin', right here on the quarter-deck?" suggested Cap'n Sproul heartily. "Folks that have been through dangers together have something of interest in common. What do you say, Miss Treat?"

"I'm a woman old enough to know my own mind, and not have any ridiculous notions," said Miss Treat firmly. "Al Dockum, I'm sorry that I ever believed a rapscallion. I've been a foolish woman. But I'll try hard ever after this to make it up to you. Do you want me to say any more?"

"Not a blamed word!" shouted the translated Mr. Dockum.

"There's only one thing for a real man to do under existin' circumstances," said Cap'n Sproul significantly. "It'll bind the trade."

Mr. Dockum understood, and acted. Miss Treat stretched up her chubby form on tiptoe to meet him.

"I reckon your pipe-stem friend in

the tree yonder saw it," said the sheriff, pointing to Mr. Pitts, whose form showed over the ridge. "And I know them folks did." He indicated a considerable gathering of citizens on the high land near at hand. "But you needn't blush, Miss Treat. When you've picked your man let the world know about it—that's my motto."

They descended from the tower and walked across the meadow upon the sod that had lifted above the flood.

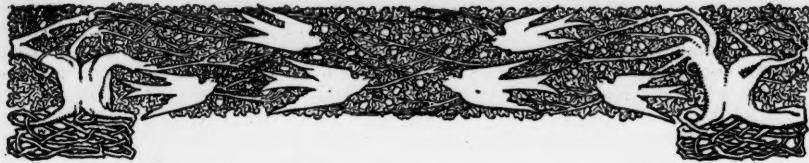
"You've got quite a job of arrestin' to do, take it by and large," suggested Hiram, trudging by the sheriff's side. "Looks like about every able-bodied man in Soperville was on one side or the other of this hoorah."

"As near as I can figger it," expounded the sheriff, "the law is made so that the feller that ain't gettin' what's comin' to him, whether it's property or punishment, can get his hooks in or have the hooks put in. As I figger it, everybody's broke even in this town. And if there's anything comin' to the man that lost his dam, let the citizens get up a bee and fix it up. The bee business seems to be flourishin' in this place. You go hunt up our team, and I'll address the assembled taxpayers of this place on that matter. I feel like talkin' to 'em."

When they were on the road again, a half hour later, Hiram made further inquiry.

"It'll be a bee," stated the sheriff grimly. "Bee was arranged after I explained what I had for a doghole in the county jail, and what might be expected in the way of provender for the men that sent me skyhootin' downriver on that meetin'-house cruise."





The Song of the Folks

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "The Beginners of Song," "Realism in Opera," "The Greatest of Opera Composers," etc.

MUSIC is a police force, according to a German song a century old. We had been told by the Greeks and Egyptians that music was medicine, and they used soothing songs to quiet their insane, instead of flogging and torturing them, as Christendom did in later centuries to drive out the demons.

Among the strolling singers of old times, and among the savages of to-day, music has also been a newspaper. Among the Botocudos, in Brazil, the warriors sing: "We had a successful hunt to-day, and now we have enough for a banquet; meat is good to eat and fire-water is good to drink." One can imagine the enthusiasm with which that last sentiment would be chorused by the assembly.

But music has also a police power, according to the Germans, among whom there is a popular song called "Song." The words, by Johann Gottfried Seume, run—or, rather, limp—as follows in a hasty translation:

Where people sing, lie down, and fear no wrong;
Take no thought of doctrine or belief;
Where people sing, no man will play the thief,
Evil-minded wretches have no song.

The poem goes on to emphasize the fact that mothers induce their children to the better life with song, lead them laughing to the May fields for the fairest cradle music; with a song, spring steals the boy from the school, while

his sister runs, gathering flower wreaths as she sings: "with song young love speaks what words find unspeakable; and friends express in song what poets cannot write." Men go to heaven with a song, and with a song they grip the sword for freedom and right; with a song, wine becomes wisdom and virtue. The poem ends:

Woe to that land whose people sing no more.

That omen, at least, is absent from the Germany of to-day, for the Germans are the most musical of peoples. At home the whole nation rocks with symphony and song, and wherever German emigrants arrive they set up orchestras and choruses at once, and cluster into clubs entitled "Gesangverein," "Männerchor," "Liederkranz," "Arion," and the like. The rallying flag of the Germans is a conductor's baton.

Germany is not only the supreme home of the artistic song, but of the popular song, or folk song, too. No other nation in history has made song so much, or so well, or sung it so largely *en masse*.

The adversaries of Martin Luther claimed that the greatest engine of his Reformation was his use of popular song for spreading his doctrines. Luther was a sort of composer himself. The worst thing his enemies could have said of him was that he played the flute. He used to improvise tunes upon it, which his friends, more thoroughly

schooled in music, set down and corrected before he sent them winging. One of his most famous compositions is the sturdy hymn: "*Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott.*"

According to a rollicking German ditty, a hundred years old and more, Luther, who was something of a rolicker himself, immortalized the phrase: "Wine, Woman, and Song." According to the uproarious *Trinklied*, whose music we owe to the popular composer, Zelter, all good fellows believe

What Martin Luther taught,
What Martin Luther taught:
He who loves not wine, woman, song,
Remains a fool his whole life long,
And such fools we are not,
And such fools we are not!

Another German lyric of the same date declares:

The world is nothing but an orchestra—an orchestra!
We are the instruments, therein—the instruments therein.
The big folks lead the band and set the time,
And we poor devils musicate like sin.

But the history of music shows that "we poor devils," the common people, have really set the time and tune. In my last article, I pointed out how, in the Middle Age, the music of the church and its scholarly composers went into wild divagations, and lost itself in the brambles and bogs of circumlocutory theory, while, all the while, in the public highway, the music of the people went its simple, sincere, and forthright way. And it was to the popular standards that the scholars at last returned for salvation and a new start—like prodigals grown thin on the dry husks of learning.

Much pretty falsehood has been told us of the *Minnesinger* and the *Meistersinger* of mediæval times. Poetry and romance have glamourized them beyond their deserts. We were told that the *Minnesingers*, or love singers, who flourished about 1190 A. D., were the German troubadours, noblemen and people of high degree who gave their lives to lofty song, singing their own compositions only, and taking no pay.

The *Meistersingers*, we were taught, were prosperous tradesmen, who, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, built up schools of art on the same principles and kept music green. As a matter of fact, while both *Minnesingers* and *Meistersingers* were of vast importance to poetry, they held music back rather than helped it along, for their melodies were written according to the strict, stiff rules of the church music of their time, and their tunes lacked heart and wings.

Wagner has dramatized in two of his most popular operas, both schools. The hero of his opera "*Tannhäuser*" was a real personage, and the other *Minnesingers* of the cast were famous in their day, though *Tannhäuser's* adventures with *Venus* may be a trifle overdrawn. *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, to whom Wagner gives the immortal melody, "To the Evening Star," was a noted poet, and the author of an epic, "*Parsifal*," on which Wagner based his last opera.

Among the greatest of the *Minnesingers* was one whose very name is a lyric, Walther von der Vogelweide. And it is he whom the hero of Wagner's one comic opera, "*Die Meistersinger*," claimed for his inspiring teacher. He claimed also to have learned his trick of song from nature herself. For this reason, in Wagner's opera, he comes into immediate clash with the ridiculously complex rules by which the *Meistersingers* fettered the lyric impulse.

Wagner has catalogued both rules and rulers thoroughly, and caricatured the whole race of musical pedants in the person of the ludicrous *Beckmesser*. Somewhat as the Hindus have pigeonholed music into ragas, the *Meistersingers* had melodies divided into rigid groups, such as the "blue" and the "red" tones, the "ape," the "rosemary," the "yellow lily," and the like. Penalties for inaccuracy were severe, and the art of the composer resembled an examination in geometry more than an outpouring of pent-up emotion.

The most famous of the real *Meistersingers* was Hans Sachs, the cob-

bler of Nuremberg, born just after America was discovered. Over six thousand of his works survive, two-thirds of them master songs. Wagner makes Hans Sachs a lovable soul, with a heart open to the natural flow of emotion.

According to Böhme, a notable distinction between a folk song and a master song was that, while the former was always anonymous, the latter usually introduced the author's name and the date into the final rhyme. Perhaps, being a shrewd tradesman, he also added an advertisement for his wares and the street number of his shop, like the thrifty widower who used his wife's tombstone for the same purpose.

One authority, Mrs. Wodehouse, finds that the master songs, "for the most part, were poor and simple, and too devoid of rhythm ever to become really popular," but still she gives the *Meistersingers* the credit of having "carried music into every German home and made it a grace and pastime of domestic life."

This seems more glory than they deserve, and Mr. Henry T. Finck, in his book on "Songs and Song Writers," says that "the pedantic artisans who vaingloriously called themselves *Meistersingers* not only derived most of their tunes from the church, but were the sworn enemies of the naïve, simple folk music." This, also, is the eventual conclusion of Mrs. Wodehouse, who says that "far more was done for melody and harmony by the obscure authors of *Volkslieder* than was ever done by *Minnesinger* or *Meistersinger*. From the *Volkslieder* the greatest masters borrowed melodies; and not only did they ingeniously arrange them as polyphonic songs in secular music, but they also made them the foundations of their greatest and most ambitious works."

It is the irony of time that the founders of the world's song are as anonymous as the coral insects who contribute themselves to form peaceful lagoons in the noisy seas. Poetry and architecture and all the arts have their

similar oblivions, though not in such numbers. Nobody knows who invented the wheel, or carved the Venus of Melos; and nobody knows who really originated the air of "God Save the King," which has served as a patriotic hymn for half the nations.

The achievements of these unknown singers were kept alive at first, like Homer's poems, by being handed from lip to ear for centuries. As last they were gathered together, written down, and compiled. Some of these song albums date as far back as 1452. There are many modern compilations in which you can find stores of home-made melody.

To the inability and indifference of the common people in the matter of the hair-splitting nonsense of the church modes, we owe the fact that they blandly sang in modes of their own, and the modes they blundered into are the only two that survived from the many modes used by the churches. The major and minor are the only two that we use to-day, and in the growing freedom of music even they are being obliterated, along with the twelve key scales that were so painfully established.

It was characteristic of folk music that the music was better than the words. This was fortunate, for anything more silly than the words of some of these songs could hardly be imagined. So, with our own "Dixie," nothing could be more divinely vivacious than the tune, nothing more diabolically inane than the text. I imagine that if any one should recite the words of "Dixie," he would be arrested for committing a nuisance. "Yankee Doodle" would be, at least, a misdemeanor.

As the English ditties of long ago had their meaningless syllables, their "lilliburleros," "tra-la-la-las," and "heigh-nanny-nos," so the German songs had their "dölpel, dölpel, dölpel," their "valleralleri juch-hei," and their "duidi-oi-a-di-o-a-di-de," and so on to the notorious Tyrolean jodler's "u-li-le-i-hu!"

When in doubt for a word, the old

poet could always help himself to one of these.

The chief traits of the ancient, as of the modern, folk song, have been neatly analyzed by Sir Hubert Parry. "There is an enormous quantity of genuine early German folk music; but it is quite singularly deficient in vividness of any kind, and is devoid of marked characteristics in the way of eccentric intervals and striking rhythms. Expression is sometimes arrived at, but always in a self-contained manner; the designs are, on an average, of a higher order, and represent stronger instincts for organization than the tunes of other nations which in actual details of material are more attractive."

"In a very large majority of tunes the first couple of phrases is repeated, thereby giving a strong sense of structural stability. And the final portion is very frequently marked by a singular *melisma* or dignified flourish in the final cadence, which clinches the design into completeness."

"Other points are the irregularity of the metre in mixing up threes and fours, the diatonic and serious nature of the tunes, and the absence of any obvious sense of vivid rhythm. The impression produced is far more intellectual and responsible than is the case with Southern tunes, and they admit of closer analysis. Folk music is often most successful in abandonment to impulse, but the type of human being which takes even its folk songs seriously is likely to succeed best in higher ranges of pure art work."

"In more modern German folk music, the influence of harmony becomes strongly apparent. Harmony represents the higher standard of intellectuality in mankind, and the Germans have always had more feeling for it than Southern races. The Tyrolese adopt arpeggios for their singular *jodels*, which are the most ornamental forms of vocal music in Teutonic countries."

"As art music grows and pervades the world, pure folk music tends to go out of use among the people. Reflec-

tions of respectable taste invade the homes of the masses more and more, and familiar fragments which are adopted from various sources by purveyors of tunes for light popular operas and such gay entertainments, take the place of the spontaneous utterances of the musical impulse of the people. True folk music is an outcome of the whole man, as is the case with all that is really valuable as art."

In my last article, I spoke of the scandal that rose in church music from the use of familiar street songs as the central themes for large concerted numbers. In Germany, that was the custom, as in Italy, but the placid flow of the German popular music gave it a degree more of fitness for masquerading in vestments, and Luther's Reformation enlarged the practice.

The composers in large instrumental forms have also used folk tunes as themes for sonatas, suites, and symphonies, and swaddled the simple infants in most elaborately embroidered lingerie, till their simple cry has been almost smothered beyond recognition.

A lightening and brightening influence upon German music came early from Italy, whence everything good in all the arts seemed fairly to explode in every direction during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Hans Leo Hassler, who studied in Italy, imported grace and melodic spirit in new measure; and at about this time—1600 A. D.—the first solo songs were composed.

But yet another reformation was necessary, and this was the reformation of German poetry. The cultured classes used French, Latin, and court German, until the language of the land was dying of neglect and contempt. In 1617, a convention was actually called to rescue the vernacular from its fatal decline. The demand created a supply of poets, among them Heinrich Albert, who wrote popular poems and set them to music with such success that he was called the "Father of the artistic folk song."

The same first aid to an injured language was given by our own Geoffrey Chaucer, who had to apologize for

putting his "Canterbury Tales" in the despised language of the people, instead of the French of the court or the Latin of the schools. It was only a few decades ago, too, that one of a group of Bohemian scholars, gathered round a table, said:

"If this roof should fall, the Bohemian language would perish from the earth."

The thought stirred the group to action, and to-day Bohemian is the spoken and written language of a whole nation that had been almost entirely seduced to German.

In our own time, the Irish have similarly revived Gaelic to an extraordinary degree. And so the German language had its crisis, when the educated had almost forsaken it. The people, of course, clung to it, and the people are the foundation of all art. The great artists are forever recalling themselves to sanity by the motto of the creators of the Russian national school of music: "Let us get back to the people."

Yet, strangely, the attention that cultivated composers began to pay to the field of German folk song was the knell of German folk song. The better sort of composers began to write simple melodies of popular appeal, and these pleased the great public more than the crude but spontaneous outpourings they had provided for themselves. They ceased to be musically self-supporting. When silk stockings from the factory are made very cheap, mothers will cease to knit woolen footwear.

The consequences have been pleasant rather than otherwise, in music, at least, for that German man or woman is the exception who does not enjoy the best music. In England and America that man or woman is the exception who does.

In consequence, there is not, in Germany, the sharp line between popular and artistic music that obtains here. For a century or more, the folk song, or *Volkslied*, and the art song, or *Kunstlied*, have been merged in the *volksthümliches Lied*, or artistic folk

song, and, while vast quantities of stupid music are consumed in Germany, it is not often so hopelessly illiterate there as elsewhere. German music is the most graceful thing in the kaiser's empire.

The musical comedy—in Germany called a *Singspiel*—has always been a splendid medium for exploiting a popular tune, and in Germany the *Singspiele* date back to 1322, or earlier. Hans Sachs wrote numberless works of this sort. In the seventeenth century, the form was crowded out of favor by the rise of opera; but in 1743 a troupe in Berlin revived its vogue with an adaptation of an English musical farce, "The Devil to Pay," under the name of "The Devil is Loose."

A most successful composer of these pieces was Johann Adam Hiller, and his songs gained a vogue they have not lost in a century and a half. As Mrs. Wodehouse says, his lyrics were among "the first of the *Kunstlieder* to be received into the ranks of the *Volkslieder*."

Other composers, who found more than momentary success by way of the opera, or *Singspiel*, were Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Hans George Nägeli, Kreutzer, Marschner, Johann André, whose "Rhine-wine Song" is still sung since 1776; E. W. Wolf, whose "*Zufriedenheit*" is nearly as old, and Wenzel Müller, whose droll "*Tailor Kakadu*" is heard to-day.

J. A. P. Schulz, who died in 1800, is an important figure, since he recognized that half of a composer's inspiration is revealed in his choice of words to compose. A whole flock of poets now began to write short ditties of peculiarly singable qualities.

The great Goethe himself poured forth a flood of immortal lyrics in the true folk spirit, and two of his friends, Johann Friedrich Reichhardt and Karl Friedrich Zelter, seized on them with avid enthusiasm.

Goethe admired the compositions of both, especially Zelter's, though, according to Mr. Finck, this counts for little, on the ground that Goethe "had no real appreciation of good music,

since he preferred the commonplace settings of Zelter and Reichardt, not only to Beethoven's, but even to Schubert's. It is, indeed, likely that the chief reason why Goethe liked Zelter's setting of his poems was that they were simple and did not distract attention from his poems "whereas in Schubert the poem becomes secondary in importance to the music."

But it may be said in Goethe's defense that Schubert was too obscure to attract his attention, while, as for Beethoven, Mr. Finck, in this selfsame book, states that he himself finds only three of all Beethoven's songs even "good." The rest he rates from "fair" to "childish." And none of the three "good" are set to Goethe's words.

Reichardt was a favorite of Mendelssohn's, and in some of his songs, such as the "Night Song," he reached a real depth. Zelter's grasp of Goethe's spirit is seen in his gravely simple version of "The King of Thule" and "The Shepherd's Lament," and his vivacity is seen in his famous "Drinking Song," whose words, by Carl Müchler, I have already quoted: "He who loves not wine, woman, song."

Himmel has been called "shallow and imperfectly cultivated," but his "Singing of the Rose" is a very graceful lyric, and many other of his songs have held their sway for a hundred years in the people's hearts. It was he that made the rattling good setting of the poem by Kotzebue, "The World is an Orchestra."

There is a delightful piquancy to some of Friedrich Kücken's songs, such as "Heart's Best Beloved, Thou!" (*Herz allerliebste, du!*) and "Gretelein." The beautiful melody from Heine's "Lorelei," which every American knows, was written by Friedrich Silcher, whose "The Soldier," with its grumbling drum accompaniment, deserves its permanence, and who made charming new music for poems as old as "Ann of Thorau," written by Simon Dach in 1638, and a "Farewell," known as early as 1610 ("Morgen muss ich fort von hier.")

And so the list might continue down

to Lassen, Reissiger, and Franz Abt, who wrote pure folk song of enormous popularity throughout the world. Two or three of Lassen's songs, such as his "Dream" and "Thine Eyes, So Blue and Tender," are household favorites in American homes, and hardly any song ever written has surpassed the popularity of Abt's "When the Swallows Homeward Fly."

In exchange for a number of British songs exported into German favor, such as "Long, Long Ago" (*Lang, lang ists hier*), and "Robin Adair," and "*Sommers Letzte Rose*," we have adopted, besides many students' songs, "The Lorelei," "Tannenbaum," "In Lauterbach One of my Stockings I Lost," "How Can I Bear to Leave Thee," which came from Thuringian Forest, and numerous others.

As we have our dialect darky songs, so the Germans sing various favorites in various dialects, some of them curiously full of elisions, some of them with words much nearer our English forms than the High German in polite usage. Thus, we find "i" for "ich," and "a" for "ein," and "hoam" for "heim" and our slang word "nit" is only a dialect form of "nicht."

In Germany, as in all old countries, numberless songs that are as familiar as the proverbs of everyday speech are quite as anonymous. Some of these authorless and composerless songs are fascinating. In many cases, modern poets have written reviving words to old tunes, as Tom Moore and Robert Burns gave new life to old Irish and Scottish airs. Thus, August Langbein, in 1812, fitted to an ancient folk dance his lyric, which may be crassly Englished:

When Grandpa a-courtin' of Grandmother came,
Then people were ruled by a true sense of shame,
They dressed up with decency, nor found it fair
In Grecian costumes on the street to go bare.

Other stanzas state that, in that ideal time—which has been grandfather's day since Adam was a grandfather—people did not read romances; preferred chil-

dren to lapdogs; were not selfish;
loved true worth, etc., etc.

A quaintly ingenious "Apprentice's Farewell," of unknown authorship, dating from the eighteenth century, begins, "*Es, es, es und es.*" It might be translated:

It, it, it and it, it is the very deuce
That, that, that and that, from home I must
vamoose.
For Frankfort I no longer care;
I wend my way to—God knows where.
I, after luck that's good or bad, 'll
Skedaddle.
You, you, you and you, you maidens all
farewell,
You, you, you and you, you maidens all fare-
well.
I wish to every pretty face
Another lover in my place.
I, after luck that's good or bad, 'll
Skedaddle.

The apprentice tells his master to his face that he doesn't like his job; he tells his mistress to her face that he doesn't like her grub; and he begs his fellow apprentices to forgive him any harm he has done; and he ends every stanza with his gay "*Ich will mein Glück probieren marschieren.*"

An irresistibly droll old ditty of the same period runs something like this:

Yester evening was Cousin Michael here,
Yester evening was Cousin Michael there.
Cousin Michael was yester evening here,
Yester evening was he there.
And one said "no" and another said "yes";
Cousin Michael said both "no" and "yes."
Cousin Michael was yester evening here,
Yester evening was he there.

The nonsense goes on that father laughed and Cousin Michael sang, while mother sat at her wheel. Later, Cousin Michael took the maid on his knee, and made her laugh and squeal. But the one fact that is emphasized is that Cousin Michael was "here yester-evening, yester evening was he there."

Folk songs are sad as well as gay, many of them full of homesickness and longing. Thus, "To the Moon" is a hundred years old, with its

Gentle moon, thou go'st so softly
Through the evening's cloudy fleece,
Thou'rt all peaceful, and I only
Wander lonely without peace.

Drearly my glances follow
Through the still and lofty blue,
Ah, how hard my lot, how cruel
That I may not follow, too!

There are love songs innumerable, of course, to some sweetheart or "*Liebchen*," "*Schätzeli*," "*Schatzeli*," or "*Dirndl*," in every dialect and every mood. Some are rapturous, some despondent, some full of May, some all December. Lovers are the same the world over.

The folk songs bear eloquent testimonial to the devastation of the wars of Frederick II, Napoleon, and the other great Pied Pipers who have led the grown men in throngs away from home, never to return. There are countless songs of farewell against the morrow when the troops march off. Some of them are of a lofty patriotism, such as Silcher's setting of an ancient Minnesong.

No sweeter death the world can show
Than his who falls before the foe.
Fair, free field where grasses blow—
Bewail him not with o'er much woe.

This poet notes that other people must die in a narrow bed, alone, while the soldier dies in fine company, for the good of the country.

But there are other songs from the poor peasants, with no thirst for glory, herded in droves from their families, to be left in heaps on fields that meant nothing to them. Of this type, is Hauff's more modern poem, "*Morgenroth*," with its doleful "Morning-red, morning-red, lightest thou me to my deathbed"; and its summing up of a soldier's career: "Yesterday upon a black horse, to-day shot through the breast; to-morrow in the cold grave."

Song has wielded a strange power in human history; it seduces men from their homes to the field, it consoles those they leave behind, it voices the moods of the lover, the cynic, the drunkard, the puritan, the maiden, and the grandam; cowherds and scholars, hussars and children, all, all. There are songs about nearly every imaginable thing on earth, except the writing and the reading of articles.

PERSEUS and the SULPHUR MATCHES.

By
Dorothy Canfield

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IN the immemorial quiet of the mountains, human life in Hillsboro seems almost at a standstill. Elsewhere the years snatch people along from childhood to the marrying age, from brides and grooms to grandparents without giving them a moment's time to savor their condition; but under the shadow of Hemlock Mountain there are long, dreamy pauses in the procession of the generations. Children are children, there, as long as their parents or grandparents live, and —people live long in the Necronsett Valley.

As a rule, therefore, the death of an old person means not only the liberation of a human soul from its prison of flesh, but the liberation of the rest of the family from its prison of enforced submission; but old Mrs. Warner found a way to reach out, even from the grave, and keep her iron grip on her meek little orphaned granddaughter. It came about from a visit paid to her by the "Burrit girls" after their mother's death. Mrs. Burrit had been just such a firm-handed mother as old Mrs. Warner herself, and her two daughters, now forty-five and forty-seven years old, had never, apparently, dreamed of rebelling from her rule. They had always worn

dresses exactly alike, cut off of the same piece of dark-gray woolen stuff in winter, and dark-blue gingham in summer, and a flower had never adorned the plain bonnets which shaded their downcast eyes, any more than a protest had ever been heard from their silent lips.

When their mother died, leaving them a little property, they went away from town for a time, and on their return they made the call on old Mrs. Warner which proved so disastrous for poor little Clara. During the visit the old woman left the conversation entirely to her granddaughter, while she gazed with ferocious concentration at the huge Gainsborough hats piled high with artificial flowers and plumes, which rode unsteadily upon the swelling, grizzled pompadours of her visitors. She counted, without concealment, the bangles tinkling at their thin, bony wrists, she lost not a grain of the rosy powder, blooming naïvely upon their patient, wrinkled faces, and she calculated, with an appalled zest, the cost of their velvet dresses. When they rose to go, her eyes followed so piercingly the rustle under their skirts, that an appalled "Silk petticoats!" almost wrote itself upon the air.

"Not a penny less than an hundred

and fifty dollars apiece, they had on their sinful backs!" she announced to Clara, coming back from the front hall. "As much as we have to live on for the whole year. And talking of beaux, and parties, and sociables! The *Burrits!*"

Clara made no answer, looking down at the big thorny leaves of a cactus, growing lustily in the only ray of sunshine which penetrated to the dark, north room. The Warners rented the best part of the large house which was their only property, and lived in three rooms in the wing "off the rent money." The old woman followed the direction of Clara's eyes, and was for a moment diverted from the iniquities of the Burrits.

"My! How I wish it would bloom while the minister's wife's brother is still in town. I would so admire to have a real Westerner see it. I get so tired of the same old crowd coming to it."

She spoke like the world-weary mistress of a famous salon. Clara nodded. Although her little round face and pretty, drooping head wore a look of dutiful resignation, it seemed possible that she, too, was tired of the same old crowd, and that the prospect of seeing the real Westerner was not without its allurements.

"It's a gre't responsibility havin' the only Night-Bloomin Cereus in town," went on the old woman. She never shortened the name of the treasure. She palpably capitalized it. "You must be sure, Clara, to keep it up and do your duty by it when I'm gone."

Clara looked very serious. "Oh, yes, grandmother."

Mrs. Warner hastened to impress the other point of view on her. "It's a gre't honor, as well as a care. I hope you appreciate that?"

"Yes, grandmother."

The old woman sighed. "It's hard to have nobody but a careless child like you to leave it to, but maybe I'll last long enough, so's you'll get more used to lookin' after it—but I don't know, these palpitations I get are something terrible."

Clara looked frightened and distressed, as she always did at the mention of any one's dying, and said nothing.

That night she was wakened by a loud call from her grandmother's room. When she ran in, she was scared to see the old woman sitting up in bed, her face quite dreadful in the moonlight. "Somethin's come over me about those Burrit girls and all!" she said, pulling her granddaughter up to her. "Look here, if you're fool enough to want feathered bunnits, and danglin' daddads, and parties of gigglin' idiots here to the house, you get 'em now! Don't you wait till after I'm dead and buried, and then go and do things just as different as you can, so's folks'll think what a mean, skinchy old tyrant I was! Don't you *dare!*"

She spoke so wildly that the girl, only half awake, and utterly dumfounded, began to cry, protesting that she would never do anything that her grandmother did not wish.

"You say that now!" said the old woman bitterly, "but how'll it be when I'm in the churchyard? Look here, you're 'most twenty years old, you're old enough to know your own mind. You say right here and now what you've got to say. I want you shouldn't be able to tell anybody that I didn't offer to let you do just as you pleased. Come! Is there anything you want you haven't got? Answer me!"

This indulgent inquiry opened before the terrified girl with the inviting click of a steel bear trap ready for occupancy. She retreated from it and from the bed, shaking her head dumbly.

"Then you won't go and do different after I'm dead? You promise it?"

Clara nodded, still backing away from the bed. The sensitive child was half beside herself.

The old woman sank back on her pillows. "Well, you can't say you haven't had your chance!" she said grimly. "Now, you remember this night when you go to my funeral."

When he heard this story, the brother of the minister's wife said: "Well, wasn't it just like an old har-



Harriet Beecher Stowe

"Then you won't go and do different after I'm dead? You promise it?"

ridan, who would put up such a game of filial blackmail, to go and die right then and there. I bet she held her breath on purpose!"

He was a lively young man from the West, "traveling" for a wholesale grocer in New York, and he was inclined* to take Hillsboro as one large joke, but he was so much interested in the Warner incident that he wasted part of a precious vacation day on the old woman's funeral.

"The whole thing's right out of one of those 'old maid, New England' stories I never took any stock in," he told his sister that night; "the musty old house, and the haircloth, and the steel engravings, and the sacred rubber plant, or whatever it is you were telling me about."

The minister's wife laughed. She and her brother were always laughing at things that did not seem funny to Hillsboro.

"Did you notice little Clara?" she asked.

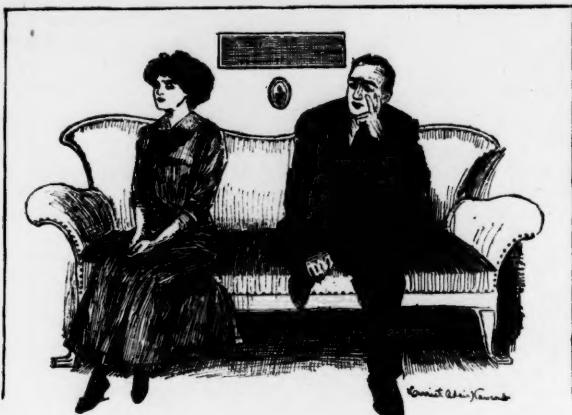
"Yes, I did. Say, she don't look as

though she was made out of the same stuff as our up-and-coming Iowa girls. Did she ever have an idea all her own, strictly self-made?"

"She's very sweet, I think," said the minister's wife.

"Oh, sweet enough! But that's not my kind, thank you."

In spite of this statement, he asked, some six months later, when his travels again brought him to Hillsboro, how the little white girl, whose cussed old grandmother died, was coming on; and he listened, without more than a dozen disrespectful comments, to the account of her life. It seemed that, just as every one had thought, Clara had been desolatingly impressed by the last interview with her grandmother. After the funeral, the old walls and furnishings settled down around her with implacable familiarity, demanding to have the same things done for them which their dead mistress had always done. Clara did not dare not do them. She was Clara Warner, left with the old Warner house, with an income of



Clara had, as he said bitterly, "passed him up."

twenty dollars a month coming in, without an effort on her part, and with the unique glory of the Night-Blooming Cereus. There was nothing for her to do but to apply herself conscientiously to keeping up the state and traditions of her family.

She put the dishes on the same shelves in the pantry, in winter she set up the stoves in their old places, and now, in spring, she was planting the flower beds in the same patterns. But, more than this, was her adopted cult of solitude. Old Mrs. Warner had not cared for society, and had held herself aloof from the life of the village, and Clara, although she looked pathetically out at the parties of young people going past, shut herself up in religious imitation of her grandmother, seeing nobody but the family of staid elderly people who lived in the other part of the house. This isolation was largely fostered by the necessity for caring for the Night-Blooming Cereus. All winter long, her life centred about the ugly, sprawling cactus leaves, as a faithful nurse's about a sickly child. She had to get up at least once every night to put more wood into the ever hungry wood-stove, and she never could be absent for more than a few hours "lest it should get a chill."

Here the energetic young man from the West interrupted. "Great Scott! Think of her wasting all that on a thorny old cactus, instead of taking care of a kid of her own!"

He had arrived at the time of the one climax in the Warner year. The Night-Blooming Cereus was about to bloom. For days before he arrived, people had been passing the word around that "Clara says she thinks it

will be Thursday week," or "Clara says it won't be till a week, come Saturday." And on the very evening of his arrival, Clara had herself flitted from house to house, like a little gray night moth, alighting long enough to say, "It will be to-night, Mrs. Greenough," or "To-night at about nine o'clock." Young Mr. Niles said that he would go with his sister to take in the show.

When the guests arrived at the Warner house, they found that Clara had adhered to the old traditions of the event with scrupulous exactness. The big tropical plant was enthroned on the dining-room table, moved into the sitting room, and surrounded by the dining-room chairs, as it always had been in old Mrs. Warner's time. Clara ushered them in, one by one, with little murmurs of greeting, apologizing in her grandmother's exact words because she had not chairs enough to go around. Mr. Niles told her heartily that he "would stand up and grow!" and was, for him, almost abashed to find that he was not at all in key with the spirit of the occasion. Everybody sat about, waiting, whispering a little, decorously, as if they were in church, until the priestess of the shrine made a gesture and the conversation stopped. It was

beginning to bloom, she explained to the ignorant foreigner in their midst.

Mr. Niles himself caught his irreverent breath as he saw the big pink bud visibly begin to swell, and the great shining petals to unfold themselves until the last beautiful, grotesquely shaped protecting petal had curled back from the centre, and the starry heart of the flower shimmered in the light of the lamp. Then a long breath arose from the silent watchers, and people turned to each other with unspoken exclamations of wonder. Some of the older women, who could not see very well, tiptoed over to the table, bending above the miraculously fine texture of the flower their worn, wrinkled faces, now glorified by admiration. A few children, allowed, as a great treat, to skip bedtime, were lifted up till their round eyes were on a level with the mysterious white splendor of stamens and pistil, and then taken back to their seats, to watch the rosy glow of the petals reflected upon the pale cheeks of the women who stooped above it.

The blooming of Mrs. Warner's cereus was an occasion never forgotten by any Hillsboro child, a memory of solemnity which was not severe, of low-toned talk as at a funeral, which was nevertheless of kindly, homely matters, and of one dazzling vision of beauty which was not asked to be useful.

It was a proud moment for Clara when the neighbors filed out, shaking her hand, but she felt very tired, and as she looked at the unwieldy plant and thought of all the weary days of constant care it needed for this one moment, it is not impossible that a gust of reaction blew through the patient quiet of her dutiful mind. It was at this time that young Mr. Niles returned for a handkerchief which he said he had left behind. After finding it, he lingered a moment, looking at Clara's pale face, and then at the cereus, already beginning slowly to lose its first radiance. He seemed about to make some forcible remark, but finally went away without having said anything more important than "good evening."

It was October before the state of the grocery business brought him again to the Green Mountains, and Clara's winter-long duel with the thermometer had begun.

"Say," he remarked to his sister the first evening of his stay, "is that little rubber-plant slave girl still holding out at the old stand? Do you know, I've got a notion to make a call on her. Do you suppose she would fall in a fit to have a real live man in the house?"

The next morning he reported in a mocking imitation of the local weekly newspaper, that "a pleasant evening" was had."

"What in the world did you talk about?" asked his sister, laughing.

"About the rubber plant, to be sure. What else? And about the preserves, and the terrible problem of what to do when the carpet wears out. She's afraid she can't get another just that pattern, and she thinks her old devil of a grandmother will spook at her nights if she doesn't."

"She certainly is a little fool!" said his sister crisply.

"She certainly lays her plans to do just what she thinks is up to her *to do!*" cried the traveling salesman, with warmth, "and there aren't so many girls nowadays that are that kind of fools, let me tell you!"

The next day, however, he echoed his sister's exclamation. "I asked her to take a drive to Granville to see a show that's there—she's never been inside a theatre in her life!—but she said she couldn't, because this time of year was so trying to *it!* And the tears of disappointment standing in her silly eyes!"

"She's very conscientious about it," said the minister's wife.

"She's the biggest fool I ever saw!" said the young man violently.

But he called on her three times more before he went away.

His circuit must have been a little shorter than winter than usual, for in January he was back again, smoking his prosperous cigars and flashing his gay waistcoats in the gray tranquillity of Hillsboro. He spent an entire week

over the trade of the local grocery stores, the evenings of which week were passed in the Warner house. As his was not a shrinking nature, he made no secret of his intentions, and when he went away, not only his sister, but all the minister's family, knew that Clara had, as he said bitterly, "passed him up for the rubber plant and her grandmother's ghost."

When he came back in June, his sister told him, as salve for his pride, that Clara had been real peaked all the winter, and looked like a little ghost.

she'll crumple up and have some sense?"

With which he proceeded toward the Warner house, whistling.

He returned, silent and infuriated. This programme was repeated each day of his visit in June, until it was a question whether he or Clara looked the more peaked. On the last day, he asked his sister to go with him, and she went, fearful of being the witness of an unpleasant scene. It was the most decorous of calls, however, only broken by an excursion out into the



"It's not that I don't want to!" she whispered pitifully, "but I don't dare! I mustn't!"

She was rewarded for her sisterly affection by having him say, as he flung out of the house: "Isn't there *anybody* in this confounded old graveyard that has any sense? Why didn't you *write* me that?"

He returned to the house, after his visit to the Warner homestead, in a ferocious temper. "There ought to be a law!" he stormed, "against allowing a girl baby to be born in New England!"

After sleeping on his problem, he took fresh courage. "She wants it as much as I do," he told the minister's wife. "It stands to reason, don't it, now, that if I go at her hard enough

garden. Here the cereus stood, in all its weird and unlovely glory.

"I think it looks as well as in grandmother's time, don't you, Mrs. Greenough?" asked Clara anxiously.

The minister's wife did not dare look at her brother, as she answered that she thought it did, indeed. When there was a move to go in and have Clara give them some cakes and raspberry shrub, Mr. Niles asked if he might stay out for a little while and smoke a cigar in the garden.

"I'll join you in a few minutes," he said carelessly.

Inside the house, Mrs. Greenough sipped her shrub, with wild surmises

knocking at her heart, surmises which were not calmed by the appearance of her brother, with a face of delighted resignation to the ways of the world. She made an excuse to go to the window, and looked out.

"Doesn't it look fine from here?" murmured Clara, at her elbow.

"Yes, it does," agreed Mrs. Greenough, looking suspiciously at her too beatific brother.

"I'll be back pretty soon," he told her the next morning, as he went away. "The boss wants this part of New England looked after with a microscope."

But he did not return for a couple of months, until a letter from his sister informed him, among other pieces of village news, that Clara Warner's N. B. C., which, as she had written him, had been ailing for six weeks past, was finally dead. She made at this time no comment on the event, but when her brother arrived the next day, she greeted his appearance of exuberant health and spirits with a dry: "Well, it's evident you haven't had any sulphur matches stuck in the ground around *you!*"

He allowed himself a light-hearted wink in her direction, which, in her character of wife to a New England minister, she did not notice. "I am now going to console the stricken and afflicted," he announced jauntily, as he set off toward the Warner house.

When he returned, his sister was shaken out of her usual bantering view toward him by his utterly cast-down condition. "Why, Clara doesn't *still* insist—" she cried.

For once, the traveling salesman had no lively word in answer. "I'm *beat!*" he said, drawing a long breath. "She says she *had* made up her mind to do it, if I would let her take the rubber plant along, and now the cussed thing's dying she takes as a judgment on her for being willing to break her promise."

"Why, nonsense!" cried the minister's wife sharply.

"Well, you ought to see the state of mind she's in. It's enough to make

anybody believe in ghosts! I bet that old heathen gets up out of her grave nights, and sits on Clara's bed, bedeviling her out of her senses."

"She hasn't any sense to be bedeviled out of!" said his sister. "If I were you I wouldn't have anything more to do with such a morbid little idiot." She was as Western as her brother, and found some phases of Hillsboro life very irritating.

"I never saw a *greater fool!*" agreed Mr. Niles, looking gloomily at his shoes, but he added: "Gee! How she would stick to a fellow through thick and thin once she was on his side, wouldn't she? I didn't suppose there was a woman outside of a book with staying powers like that."

"It's self-will. Besides, she *can't* go on living there. The people that rented the house have moved away, because she suspected them of breaking a branch off *it!*"

"She said she wasn't afraid to stay alone, and she could take in sewing to keep things going. She said she deserved to suffer, for letting that confounded— Oh, shucks! Who could have guessed she'd have taken it *that way?*"

Mrs. Greenough could not refrain from one sisterly dig. "I guess you've had about enough sulphur matches in yours," she remarked dryly, over her darning.

He did not answer, staring out of the window at the Warner house, just visible in the distance. The children had come in from school and gone out to play, and the minister's wife had finished setting the table for tea, before he moved, and addressed himself to her in the dusk.

"No, by Jupiter, I haven't had enough!"

"Enough what?" she asked blankly, at a loss for once in her quick-tongued life.

"Enough of Clara Warner, to be sure," he answered briskly. "Send one of the children over to have her here to tea, won't you?"

After tea, the minister's wife tactfully left the two alone in the sitting

room, and took her darning into the dining room, where finally Clara followed her, showing a pretty, round face that was almost tragic in its paleness. She sat down, drawing little sobbing breaths.

"It's not that I don't want to!" she whispered pitifully, "but I don't dare! I mustn't! I should see grandmother's face as it looked that—I shouldn't have made a promise if I didn't mean to keep it."

Mrs. Greenough made no comment, pursing up her lips, and darning steadily. After a time, she remarked neutrally: "Where's my brother? Why doesn't he come in here, if we're to spend the evening all together?"

"I—I asked him to stay in there for a quarter of an hour or so, until I could get quieted down."

Mrs. Greenough laid down a stocking, looked at her visitor in silence for a moment, and swallowed hard. "Well, it's twenty minutes or more since you came in. If you think you can stand him now, I suggest that we go back into the sitting room. His visits aren't so long that I get tired of seeing him."

They found Mr. Niles apparently returning from closing the window opening on the porch. He was flushed and breathed quickly; but, sitting down, he engaged the two ladies in an innocuous, easily fluent conversation on the advantages of different kinds of soap. His tone sounded unnaturally smooth and light to his sister's experienced ears, and she gave him repeatedly a scrutinizing glance, at which he finally laughed aloud.

At this moment the doorbell rang. "I'll go," said Mr. Niles kindly, to his sister. "You must be tired."

When he came back he was still in the same expansive mood. "There's a small fire in the village," he said, "and they stopped to ask your husband to help put it out. But I knew he was busy writing sermons, so I said I'd take his place."

"A fire?" they cried. "Where? Is it a house? Or a barn?"

"They didn't say," he called back, banging the front door behind him.

"I wonder where it is?" murmured Clara. "Old Mr. Melton's hay barn, perhaps. I wonder if we can see the smoke from here."

"I wouldn't bother to look if I were you," recommended the minister's wife firmly.

Later, as Clara brooded silently over the fire, gazing sadly at the andirons, she seemed moved by a sudden impulse of affection, going over to the girl and giving her hand a little squeeze. "You're a nice child, Clara, if you are awfully New Englandy!"

"I think perhaps I'd better be going home," suggested Clara, rousing herself.

"No, no; wait till my brother comes in."

When that event occurred, the minister's wife ran to meet him in the hall.

"Well?" she said, looking at him hard, and smiling a little, "did you manage to save any of it?"

He whirled about on her, with an ambiguous expression on his face. "Mrs. Greenough, you're the devil!" he said unceremoniously.

She laughed. "Clara's in the sitting room. Break it gently to her, and for goodness' sake, let me have the news from the front as soon as possible!" With which, she disappeared toward the kitchen.

It was an hour and a half later, indeed, almost midnight, when the young man found her piling slices of fruit cake upon a plate near a pitcher of cider. In spite of these festive preparations, she looked up with a lively anxiety at her brother, who, very pale and solemn, nodded his head reassuringly.

"Yes, it's all right. Bring on the cakes and ale. I need it! It's the most serious thing I ever did—this getting engaged."

"Did she—how did you—oh, tell me something about it!"

He did not smile, but a little nervous reaction twitched his lip as he answered gravely: "Why, as near as I can make out, she's marrying me because there's nothing else for her to do with her wrecked and ruined life. Even the old—even Grandmother War-

ner couldn't ask anything more, *now*, could she?"

Her sister said indignantly: "Why, for mercy sake, doesn't she realize what a chance in a million she's getting?"

His gravity grew portentous. "Apparently, she thinks that my position is about like a grocery boy's," he said. "She is an angel! She said—the *dear!*—she said that she had known long

enough what it was to be rich and have a high position and great possessions to live up to. She feels that humble poverty will be a relief."

By the glimmering light of the pantry candle, brother and sister looked at each other for a moment. Then Mr. Niles showed that he was made of good stuff. He advanced threateningly upon his sister. "If you laugh I'll kill you!" he cried.



To My Piano

MY friend, we're growing older, you and I;
The giant Time has marked us in his flight;
He's stolen from my cheek the rose of youth,
And robbed your dear keys of their snowy white.
He's dimmed my eyes, and withered both the hands
That played upon you in the days gone by—
He's dulled the tender chords I loved to touch;
We're growing old together, you and I.

My friend! How often have you proven that!
You've always understood my ev'ry mood;
You've calmed my anger—lulled me with your tone
When o'er your keys for hours I would brood.
You've known my secrets—shared my sorrows, too;
Your minor chords would echo ev'ry sigh;
I've told you all my hopes—my fears; and now
We're growing old together, you and I.

JOSEPH PATTERSON GALTON.



The DRIFT of THINGS

BY
C.H. FORBES-LINDSAY

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY LEONARD

BERTIE SINCLAIR sank dejectedly into a seat of the suburban train, recognizing with scant acknowledgment the salutations of his fellow commuters. For the first time in his life he was called upon to play the man, and the occasion found him wanting. Huddled in the window corner, with head sunk between shoulders and eyes vacantly staring into space, he presented a pitiful picture of dull misery.

Two years before, while Bertie was still in the early twenties, his father had died, leaving him without kith or kin. Aside from a bequest of fifty thousand dollars and the heritage of some neutral qualities, the elder Sinclair had done little toward equipping his boy for the battle of life. He had been a man of good habits and professional ability, but utterly lacking in mental stamina and strength. His life, like the course of a canal, had run along fixed lines; his work had been routine. Clean living and faithful labor had carried him slowly but certainly to the position of chief engineer of the P. Q. & R. Railroad. Unimaginative, passionless, machine-like, he

had, after the death of his young wife, settled with temperamental readiness into the narrow rut of commonplace daily duties. Each morning he sat down to his desk precisely at nine o'clock, and left it with equal regularity at five. His leisure was devoted to the boy, whom he educated at home in an atmosphere of pastoral simplicity. And so John Sinclair glided through life without friction and without deviation, even as his locomotives ran, smooth and straight, to their goals.

Bertie inherited the mental characteristics of his father. Had he followed the lines of least resistance, his life might have been equally easy and eventless, but with the sudden possession of money, a feeble ambition was aroused in him. He resigned his position with the railroad and launched upon the career of the capitalist. At the same time he married—a sweet girl, but not the kind of a wife to hearten a weakling—and now there was a little one. The thought of it, which would have nerved a man, sent a wave of chill fear over Bertie Sinclair.

A young greenhorn who has money to invest need never long lack oppor-



He would have been ground to death had not Eph. Tappem dragged him out of the nick of time.

tunity. Bertie was not altogether a fool, and he had primed himself to a degree of caution which he confidently felt would insure him against making a mistake. In the course of a few months he declined scores of propositions—patent rights, promotion schemes, and partnerships—some of them unquestionably sound. At length the chance came along that was to make him a millionaire. It was a mining venture—such a hoary old story that the telling of it would be tedious.

It is a comic tragedy played every day of the year in every city of the country. The plot never changes, and a full cast is never lacking.

Bertie swallowed convulsively as he thought of the many happy hours he and Mary had passed building castles in the air on the flimsy foundation of the mine in Mexico. Almost a year elapsed before he awoke to the fact that he had been duped. Meanwhile, the baby had come and his little remaining money had dwindled rapidly.

Instead of accepting the situation when it became obvious, and taking measures to avoid the *débâcle*, he had buoyed himself upon unreasoning hope—the pap of the helpless. That morning he had carried to the bank, where his account was exhausted, a bundle of shares of El Precio Mining Company, representing an investment of fifty thousand dollars.

"I want to borrow a thousand on this collateral, Mr. Hodder," he said to the cashier, with whom he was acquainted.

"We can't do it, Mr. Sinclair," replied the banker, after a glance through the contents of the package.

"Well, make it five hundred. I really need some money," continued Bertie pleadingly.

The distress of the youngster was reflected in the kindly countenance of the older man, but business instinct prompted his response.

"Look here, Sinclair, I had better be frank with you. That scrip is not worth anything—at present. It may, of course, be valuable some day, though I doubt it. I wish it was within my power to accommodate you, but we really couldn't lend fifty dollars on it, and I should not waste time trying elsewhere if I were you."

Incredible as it must seem to the man of mental balance, the cold, stern fact that he was beggared broke upon Bertie Sinclair with the suddenness of a thunderclap, as he passed out of the bank doors fumbling his last five-dollar bill. The full realization of the truth flooded his brain with benumbing effect and stayed the action of his heart. All that afternoon, like a man in a dream, he aimlessly paced the streets, rended alternately by flaming anger and panicky fear.

The evening meal in the modest suburban home passed in gloomy silence. Bertie was experiencing the dull lethargic reaction that succeeds mental excitement. He swallowed his food with difficulty and, contrary to his usual abstemious habit, drank four or five glasses of wine in rapid succession.

"Bertie," remarked Mrs. Sinclair as

the dinner drew to a close, "have you forgotten that we go to the Tappems' reception to-night?"

"Bother! Yes, it had entirely slipped my memory, Mary. Can't we get out of it?" Then, at a sudden thought, he continued: "Never mind. We'll go. I shall be dressed before you are."

Ephraim Tappem was the president of the P. Q. & R. He owed his success in life to certain native qualities, but it is doubtful whether he would ever have risen above the rank of an artisan but for the assistance of the former chief engineer. John Sinclair had one day stumbled and fallen heavily in front of an approaching train. He would unquestionably have been ground to death had not Eph. Tappem, who was the fireman of an engine standing near by, swung himself from the cab and dragged the prostrate man out of danger in the nick of time. Sinclair's gratitude was lifelong. He afforded the young fireman the means of acquiring a technical education, and secured him rapid promotion in the engineering department. Such good use did Tappem make of these advantages, that before Sinclair's death, his protégé had become the head of the road.

Tappem was a stranger to the softer virtues. Altruism and gratitude were beyond his comprehension. Intensely egotistical and conceited, he never felt under any obligation to the elder Sinclair, whose lack of push and enterprise excited his contempt, but he might have done something for the son had he remained with the road. Bertie's resignation from the company, and his subsequent failure in the field of finance, had elicited from the president the remark: "You could not expect a jackass to breed anything but a donkey."

The Sinclairs were frequently invited to functions at the Tappem residence. Mrs. Tappem, although not one whit less vulgar and vain than her husband, was a woman of kindly tendencies and, moreover, presentable people were never too numerous in her drawing-room. The Tappems lived in a large stone house, the grounds of which ad-

joined the little back garden of the Sinclairs. An easy climb over a low fence let them into the magnate's property, and they walked over well-kept lawns and graveled paths to the mansion.

The Tappems were big, coarse persons, who appeared to be suitably placed in the setting of costly and garish furniture that surrounded them. Ephraim Tappem was a slack-jointed man of colossal frame. His large, round head was covered with closely cropped iron-gray hair. The features of the clean-shaved face were gross and irregular. The forehead was abnormally developed and protruding. The straight, bushy brows overhung small, beady eyes. The large, unshapely nose, terminating in a broad, flat upper lip, and the long straight line of the enormous mouth, were suggestive of a door knocker. Tappem had the jaw of a bulldog and the neck of an apoplectic.

Mrs. Tappem was built upon equally liberal lines, but her bulk entirely lacked the hard and rugged appearance of her husband's. She was fat to a degree that rendered movement difficult. Her face was commonplace, and her hands like little legs of mutton. Mrs. Tappem's sixtieth year was distressingly near, but she dyed her hair and affected the dress of a woman of thirty. Her frills and tucks, with a profusion of jewelry scattered over them, gave her the appearance of a Christmas tree. At the centre of her corsage was a diamond star that shone like the headlight of a locomotive.

Bertie was in a condition favorable to hypnosis and, as the evening wore on, the fascination of this bauble grew upon him. With fixed gaze he followed it from point to point, dreamily wondering how much it had cost, and whether the woman had many more such gems. It had never occurred to him before—but the thought now moved him to indignation—that money should be locked up in such useless frippery, while thousands were suffering for want of food. The price of a single one, of that cluster of stones,

would keep his little family in their accustomed comfort for a year.

The sound of Mr. Tappem's voice awoke a thought that had been latent in Bertie's brain all the evening. He knew the part his father had played in the making of Ephraim Tappem, and he determined to appeal to the millionaire for help in his present predicament. The overwrought state of his mind blinded Sinclair to the proprieties and led him to seek an immediate interview with his host. The moment the latter left the group with whom he had been conversing, Bertie intercepted him.

"Mr. Tappem, may I speak to you?" he asked, with a show of embarrassment.

"Certainly. I shall be delighted," replied the president, but his manner belied the words.

"I would like to speak with you privately, if you please, sir. It is a matter of urgency, I assure you."

"Oh, well, come upstairs. I suppose it need not take long."

Mr. Tappem ponderously preceded the young man to an upper room. He threw open the door and switched on the electric lights.

"Take a seat, Sinclair," he said, indicating a chair, in front of which he planted himself with legs apart and hands thrust deep into the pockets of his trousers. Generosity was not one of Ephraim Tappem's failings. He boasted that he could detect the approach of a "touch" instinctively, and that he was always prepared to ward it off before it reached him. He experienced a sombre delight in seating a wriggling supplicant and standing over him in menacing massiveness. So he stood now, looking down at the dejected figure with a mixed expression of contempt and amusement. In the brief silence that ensued it seemed to the morbid fancy of Bertie Sinclair that the figure of the costly carpet broke into a sardonic grin, mocking his misery.

"Well, Sinclair, I must ask you to be brief. My guests will be going in supper in a very few minutes."



"I am ruined—beggared—I have lost all my money—every penny of it."

Bertie glanced up at the repellent face of the president, and the hopelessness of the situation oppressed him. He let his eyes fall to the heavy chain that spanned the magnate's waistcoat and desperately blurted out his request, ardently wishing the while that the interview was over.

"Mr. Tappem, I am—that is, I was going to ask you—Mr. Tappem, I am ruined—beggared—I have lost all my money—every penny of it. Won't you lend me a few hundred dollars, please, until I can get on my feet again?"

Once more Bertie's eyes sought the adamantine features of the millionaire. There was no hope to be found there, and he waited dully for the reply. It came in cold, incisive terms.

"Really, Sinclair, that is a most extraordinary request. If, as I have, you had worked hard for every dollar that ever found its way into your pocket, you would not talk of hundreds so lightly. You will hardly believe it, but, although I commenced to support myself before I was ten, I had

never seen a hundred dollars in one sum when I was your age. I'm sorry you have got into such a fix, and I shall be glad to do what I can for you. Come up to the office to-morrow and I'll see if I can't find you a position in the road again. Your old place is filled, but I dare say we can put you in somewhere at fifty or sixty dollars a month and you'll soon work your way up. For the present I can let you have twenty dollars, if that will be of any use to you."

Sinclair burned with indignation as he thought of how much this man owed to his father.

"I had thought that, perhaps, a remembrance of what my father—" he began, as he rose from the chair.

"We won't prolong the discussion now," broke in Mr. Tappem, with a gesture of impatience. "You had better go in and get something to eat. The folks are at supper. I shan't be troubled with that young man again, I suspect," he muttered, as Sinclair disappeared at a turn of the stairway.

As Bertie passed the open door of the supper room, his eye fell upon that blazing cluster of diamonds resting upon the ample bosom of Mrs. Tappem. He found his wife and, securing their wraps, they left for home.

As they passed round to the back of the house, Mrs. Sinclair stopped.

"The gardener, or some careless workman, has left a ladder standing against the wall," she said, laying a detaining hand on her husband's arm. "It is right against Mrs. Tappem's window, too. Mr. Tappem sleeps on the east side. He likes to get the first rays of the morning sun. I think that we ought to go back and tell some one about that ladder, Bertie."

"Nonsense, Mary!" exclaimed her husband impatiently. "We've enough to do to attend to our own business. Let them look after theirs."

They resumed their walk in silence. It was a bright moonlight night with a touch of frost in the air. The clear, bracing atmosphere was delicious after the close heat of the reception rooms. Mary felt the oppression that had weighed upon her all the evening lifting.

"Isn't it lovely, Bertie!" she said, with a stifled sigh, as they reached the back door. "I hate to go in."

After taking a look at the baby and kissing his wife good night, Bertie Sinclair went to his own room which adjoined theirs. He drew off his outer garments and threw himself upon the bed. There he lay for an hour or

more with wide-open eyes staring into the darkness. A thought which had floated nebulously through his mind for hours was slowly condensing into purpose, impeded by the characteristic irresolution that allowed him to be drawn this way and that by conflicting considerations. As the clock in the hall below struck the hour of two, he rose softly and slipped on a suit of clothes and a pair of light shoes. Tip-toeing to the door of his wife's room, he listened with restrained breathing. All was quiet within.

Bertie stole down to the dining room and turned on a light. Going over to the buffet, he poured out a glass of whisky, with a shaking hand. The sharp tang of the unaccustomed liquor strangled him and he sat down, stifling a cough with his handkerchief. Soon a grateful glow spread through his body. His quivering nerves grew still, his heart beat strong and regularly, and his brain cleared.

What wonderful stuff it was, and why had he not thought of it before? How it would have lightened the agonies of the past days? He rose and took another drink—this time with only a momentary catching of the breath. He lit a cigarette and sat down to enjoy the luxury of calm thought.

His agitation had entirely vanished, and he rejoiced in an unwonted courage. Taking a tumbler from the table, he balanced it on the points of two fingers, smiling with pleasure at the



He listened with restrained breathing.

bravado of the act. Fifteen minutes before, had he attempted to do such a thing, he must have dropped the glass and alarmed the household. Wonderful stuff, indeed!

With less of caution than when he descended the stairs, Bertie Sinclair crossed the kitchen and opened the back door. He hastened across the little garden, that lay in the open moonlight, and plunged into the friendly shadow of the trees beyond. Half an hour later he reentered the house with stealthy steps, and sought his bed.

Sinclair awoke early from a brief and troubled sleep. His first thought was of the diamond brooch, and he groped under the pillow until his hand closed upon it. His wife was not yet stirring, and he eagerly embraced the chance of leaving the house without meeting her. He dressed hastily, left a brief note under the door, and made his way noiselessly out of the house, stopping for a moment to swallow a weak draught of whisky and water.

At noon Sinclair arrived, flushed and feverish, at New York. He had pawned his watch for the means of making the journey from Philadelphia. It was his intention to sell the diamond cluster to some small pawnbroker for, say, one thousand dollars. The man, he thought, might be depended upon to break up the ornament rather than in-

cur a heavy loss by owning to the possession of it. He wandered about for an hour or more seeking what should look like a favorable place for his purpose.

At length he decided upon a dingy pawnshop in Canal Street. He spent some minutes gazing into the window with a pretense of interest in one of the endless variety of objects displayed for sale. At last, he summoned all his courage and, with quickened pulse, pushed open the door and entered. To his immense relief, the place was empty but for a swarthy, eagle-eyed Hebrew, who stood expectantly on the farther side of the counter.

With trembling fingers, Sinclair unwrapped the diamond brooch and handed it to the man, saying in a voice that refused to rise above a husky whisper:

"I want to sell this. What will you give for it?"

The Jew glanced at the gems—hardly more—and then turned on Sinclair a penetrating look that filled him with apprehension.

"It belongs to my wife," he hastened to explain. "I want to sell it outright. How much will you give me for it?"

The man tossed the trinket onto the counter and said:

"Ten cents. It's paste."



The White Poppies of Oblivion

THE poppies stand by the open gate,
So tall and white and sweet,
And the path is stretching golden, straight,
Beckoning my weary feet.
Will I find my rest in that city bright,
The rest so long I've yearned,
Where, as in the dreamless sleep of night,
Comes the peace so hardly earned?

R. E. B. HALL.

What the Editor Has to Say

IN this number you have, in all probability, read the fourth installment of "The Great Conspirator." If you have read the first installment, we are sure that you have followed it from month to month, and that you agree with us in saying that it is the greatest serial that has been published by any magazine, anywhere, in years. Have you any idea yet as to the identity of the man or woman who fired the fatal shot? You have read a good deal of the story by this time; you have at your command all the facts connected with the murder. You have as good a chance to solve the problem as one who was on the ground at the time and could view the circumstances of the case at first hand.

WE have received a great many letters in regard to the serial—all in praise of it as a story, and many hazarding guesses as to the solution of the mystery. It may interest you to know that Howard Fielding, the author, is now at work on further narratives which will appear in SMITH'S MAGAZINE. In regard to those who think they have solved the riddle, E. CORBAULD, of 2001 Q Street, Washington, D. C., writes:

"I have read and find 'The Great Conspirator' absorbing and interesting, so far. My idea is that Mrs. Seabury shot Alice, so that she could not reveal her money transactions."

Another letter—from MISS STREET, of 120 Chestnut Avenue, Jersey City:

"I have read two installments of

'The Great Conspirator' with a lot of interest. I think that Arthur was the one who committed the deed, at the time before the storm when he was oblivious to everything around him. In this case, of course, there would be no motive, as he did not intend to do it. Whether he did it or not, I think Sylvia and Jack think this, by their actions and words. I hope that this is the correct solution."

And now, here is another suggestion, which comes from E. MILLER, of Sewickley, Pa. He writes:

"The story promises to be as good as anything I have ever read. The vignette at the head of each installment plainly shows that lightning fired the pistol."

THESE are three letters representative of a great many more. As we have said before, there are only two people in the world who know the solution. One, of course, is Howard Fielding. The other is the present writer. We don't think that we will be telling too much when we say that no one has guessed right yet, and that each of the guesses printed above is a considerable distance from the mark. We must, however, compliment Mr. Miller on his ingenuity. But when he remembers that the artist who drew the headpiece to which he refers knows no more about the solution of the mystery than he does himself, he will realize that it was impossible for him to hint at it in his drawing. However, the idea is such a good one that

we are sorry we did not think of it ourselves.

THE complete novel which will open the January number of the magazine is a particularly strong and moving story by Elmore Elliot Peake. The principal character is a young man, bred in the North, but of Southern family and antecedents. His return to the home of his ancestors, the love story, to which it leads, the strange girl by whom he is attracted—are all described with a fidelity and charm which make the tale one of the most absorbing interest.

THE January number comes out in December; so you must not fail to read in it Anne O'Hagan's story, "A Perfectly Sensible Christmas," which you will find wise, interesting, and seasonable. Another worthwhile feature is Charles Battell Loomis' little sermon, "On Giving Lifts." Do you remember ever having been invited to ride by a stranger passing you on the road in an automobile? Probably not. Mr. Loomis has had a surprising experience, and he has something to say on the subject.

THREE are a great many unusually good short stories in the January issue. Max Marcin, whose work you may have seen in other

magazines, has written for it a story called "A Hero in the Flesh," which will interest every woman who reads it. From now on, Mr. Marcin will contribute regularly to SMITH'S; and this story, we feel, will prove a very good letter of introduction to you. It shows the struggle between the old and the young generation—between the father, who has been bred in the most austere simplicity, and the daughter, whose heart craves a broader mental horizon and a wider life.

THEN there is "Margot's Money," by S. Carleton, author of "Bellegarde's Girl," and a great many good short stories. If this isn't a good love story, with real thrill and feeling in it, we don't know a good story when we see it. Then there is a story about a woman with a past to live down, who succeeded in living it down and winning the happiness she deserved. This story is by William Hamilton Osborne, and is called "The Troubled Eyes." There are some more funny verses by Wallace Irwin, and stories by Edward Boltwood, Virginia Middleton, and others. And, of course, no number of SMITH'S would be quite complete without a story by Holman F. Day. The story that you will read next month, "The Affair of the Caterwousler," is equal to the best he has written.



A LIVING FROM POULTRY

\$1,500.00 FROM 60 HENS IN TEN MONTHS ON A CITY LOT 40 FEET SQUARE

To the average poultryman that would seem impossible and when we tell you that we have actually done a \$1,500 poultry business with 60 hens on a corner in the city garden 40 feet wide by 40 feet long we are simply stating facts. It would not be possible to get such returns by any one of the systems of poultry-keeping recommended and practiced by the American people; still it is an easy matter when the new

PHILO SYSTEM

is adopted.

THE PHILO SYSTEM IS UNLIKE ALL OTHER WAYS OF KEEPING POULTRY

and in most respects just the reverse, accomplishing things in poultry work that have always been considered impossible and getting unheard-of results that are hard to believe without seeing.

THE NEW SYSTEM COVERS ALL BRANCHES OF THE WORK NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS

from selecting the breeders to marketing the product. It tells how to get eggs at the lowest cost, how to hatch every egg and how to raise nearly all the chicks hatched. It gives complete plans in detail how to make everything necessary to run the business and at less than half the cost required to handle the poultry business in any other manner.

TWO-POUND BROILERS IN EIGHT WEEKS are raised in a space of less than a square foot to the broiler without any loss, and the broilers are of the very best quality, bringing here three cents per pound above the highest market price.

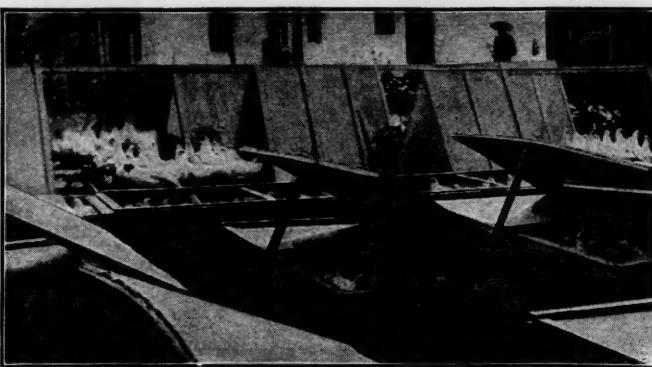
OUR 6-MONTHS OLD PULLETS ARE LAYING AT THE RATE OF 24 EGGS EACH PER MONTH

in a space of two square feet for each bird. No green cut bone of any description is fed, and the food used is inexpensive as compared with food others are using.

Our new book, the **PHILO SYSTEM OF POULTRY KEEPING**, gives full and clear directions on the wonderful discoveries with simple, easy-to-understand directions that are right to the point, and 55 pages of illustrations showing all branches of the work from start to finish.

DON'T LET THE CHICKS DIE IN THE SHELL

One of our secrets of success is to save all the chickens that are fully developed at hatching time, whether they can crack the shell or not. At the time I first hatched them I did not know what to do with them. I had heard of the ancient Egyptian and Chinese which enabled them to sell the chicks at 10 cents a dozen.



CHICKEN FEED AT 15 CENTS A BUSHEL

Our book tells how to make the best green food with but little trouble and have it good appetizing day after day, winter or summer. It is just as impossible to grow a large crop of green food as it is to keep a cow without hay or fodder.

OUR NEW BROODER SAVES 2 CENTS ON EACH CHICKEN

No lamp required. No danger of chilling, overheating or burning up the chickens. No lamps or any kind of fire. They also keep all the lice off the chickens automatically or kill any that may be on them when placed in the brooder. Our book gives full plans and the right to make and use them. One can easily be made in an hour at a cost of 25 TO 50 CENTS.

TESTIMONIALS

Bellefontaine, Ohio, June 7, '09

Mr. E. R. Philo, Elmira, N. Y.
Dear Sir:—I just want to tell you of the success I have had with the Philo system. In January, 1909, I purchased one of your Philo System books and I commenced to hatch chickens. On the third day of February, 1909, I set out my hatching boxes and put them in one of your dress brooders and we had zero weather. We succeeded in bringing through nine little ones got killed by accident. On June 1, one of the pullets laid her first egg, and the most remarkable thing is she has laid every day since up to the present time. Yours truly, R. S. Leach.

265 S. Clinton St., Baltimore, Md., May, 23, 1909

Dear Sir:—I have embarked in the poultry business on a small scale (Philo System) and am having the best of success so far, sixty-eight per cent. of eggs hatched by hens, all chicks alive and healthy at this writing; they are now three weeks old. Mr. Philo is a pure genius. I don't believe his System can be improved upon, and still I am now looking for more yards to have, but 15x30 where I am now. Yours truly, C. H. Leach.

South Britain, Conn., Apr. 14, 1909

Mr. E. R. Philo, Elmira, N. Y.

Dear Sir:—I have followed your system as close as I could; the result is a complete success that can be imitated on nature's own system. The first experience I had with your System was last December. I hatched 17 chicks under two hens, put them as soon as possible into your brooder, and at the age of three months I sold them at 25¢ a pound. They then averaged 2½ lbs. each, and the man I sold them to said they were the finest he ever saw, and he wanted to spare this season. Yours truly, A. E. Nelson

Osakis, Minn., June 7, '09

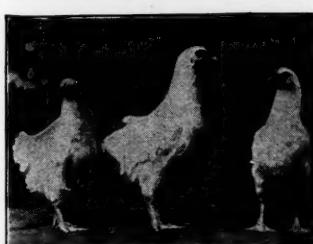
Mr. E. R. Philo, Elmira, N. Y.
Dear Sir:—You certainly have the greatest system the world has ever known. I have had experience with poultry, but I know you have the system that brings the real profits. Yours, J. Underwood

Brockport, N. Y., Sept. 12, 1908

Mr. E. R. Philo, Elmira, N. Y.
Dear Sir:—I have had perfect success brooding chickens your way. I think your method will raise stronger, healthier chicks than the old way of using lamps and besides it saves so much work and risk. Yours respectfully, M. S. Gooding

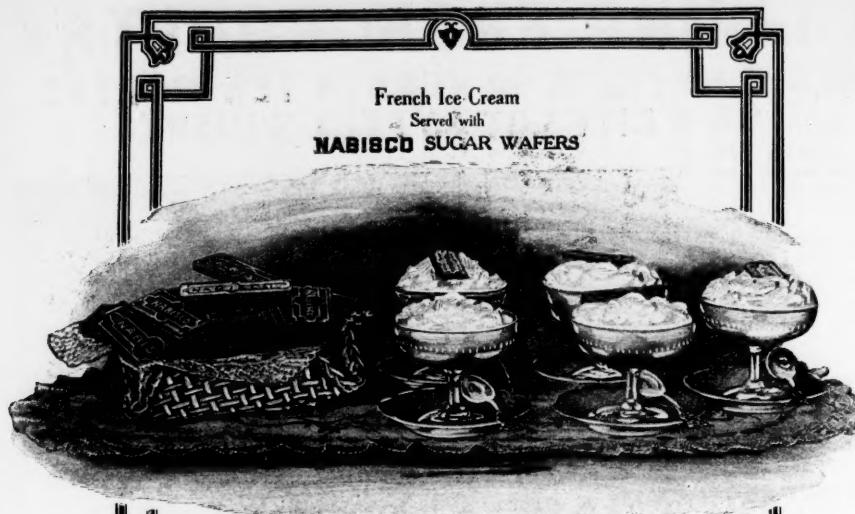
Send \$1.00 direct to the publisher and a copy of the latest revised edition of the book will be sent you by return mail.

E. R. PHILo, PUBLISHER, 169 THIRD ST., ELMIRA, N. Y.



THREE-POUND ROASTERS TEN WEEKS OLD

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Originality is the secret of success in entertaining. The adaptability of NABISCO Sugar Wafers to the creation of successful desserts offers surprise after surprise. At the next "at home" serve French Ice Cream with

NABISCO SUGAR WAFERS

Recipe for French Ice Cream

Put yolks of four eggs into saucepan, add one cup of sugar and two of milk. Stir over fire until thick. It must *not* boil. Strain, cool, add one pint whipped cream, one teaspoon salt, one tablespoon vanilla extract. Freeze—serve with NABISCO Sugar Wafers.

In ten cent tins

Also in twenty-five cent tins

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Pabst Extract American Girl Calendar for 1910

The exquisite beauty of the Pabst Extract American Girl Calendar for 1910 cannot be described.

It must be seen to be fully appreciated.

So pure—so subtly charming—so sweet and beautiful is this portrayal of the American Girl that it will appeal to you at once.

In panel shape, measuring 7 inches in width and 36 inches in length, it lends itself perfectly to the filling of those corners that are so hard to decorate. Printed in fourteen delicately blended colors, it harmonizes pleasantly with the color scheme of any room.

You will surely want one of these calendars for your room, den or office.

This calendar is free from advertising, even the pads being printed on the back. All we ask is that you think, when you glance at it, of

Pabst Extract *The Best Tonic*

and remember "It brings the roses to your cheeks"—that it is the perfect blending of malt and hops into a builder of health, strength, vigor and vitality—a tonic that enriches the blood, steadies the nerves and rebuilds the wasted tissues of the body.

For Sale by All Druggists—Insist Upon It Being Pabst

This Calendar is Free

All we ask you to do is to send us ten cents in stamps or silver to cover cost of packing and mailing. Write today.

PABST EXTRACT DEPT. 4
Milwaukee, Wis.



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



What Position

Is there some position "higher up" that you have your eyes on, but which requires **special training** to secure and hold? Is there some line of work that appeals to you more strongly than the one in which you are now engaged, but which calls for **expert knowledge**?

Summed up—***is lack of training keeping you back?*** If so, the International Correspondence Schools have a way by which you can advance—a way that is within your means—that doesn't rob you of your working time—that doesn't necessitate your leaving home—that doesn't mean giving up the little pleasures of life—and that doesn't require you to buy a single book.

Mark the attached coupon and learn **how the I. C. S. can advance you**. Marking it costs you nothing and yet brings you information and advice that **will help you shape your career**—information and advice that you cannot get elsewhere at any price?

Men Who Have Won

With the help of your Course in Chemistry, I was able to gain a sufficient knowledge of Sugar Chemistry while working as electrician, afterwards getting a position of Assistant Chemist, and have now advanced to the position of Assistant Chemical Superintendent in a Sugar House making 300,000 bushels of sugar each crop.

HERBERT W. ANDERSON
Preston, Oriente, Cuba.

When enrolling in the I. C. S. I was engaged as a common laborer with no regular employment. Some time after enrolling I was offered a position as Fireman in the Union Utility Company, in which I am employed as 8th engineer, to which position I was promoted in six months. The Chief Engineer, 2nd Engineer and one of the Assistant Engineers are all I. C. S. students. Many other I. C. S. students have gone from this plant to take up better jobs.

I can thank the I. C. S. for the advancement I have made and can heartily recommend it to anyone.

EUGENE C. BOWMAN, 33 Kingwood St., Morgantown, W. Va.

I took a Course with your Schools for about four months before taking an examination on May 11, 1906, and on Feb. 8, 1906, I came measurement as Clerk to the Cashier of Customs with a salary of \$1,000.00 a year.

I have a very pleasant position in contrast with my former position, which was a teacher in the Public Schools, with an increase of over 100 per cent in salary.

JOHN M. SNOOK,
Care of Custom House, Baltimore, Md.

A Course in the I. C. S. is well worth its study. I know the price of my Course has been returned to me many fold.

When I started this Course I was employed as wireman for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, in Jersey City. In January, 1906, I was promoted to Clerk with a salary of \$1,000.00 a year, with an additional \$25.00 per month in pay. I am sure that it is only on account of I. C. S. training that I am able to fill this position satisfactorily. I am, therefore, glad I started to study and will recommend the Schools to any one.

J. T. APFELDORN,
24 Garrison Ave., Jersey City, N. J.

I held the position of second-hand to overseer in a Cotton Mill when I first began with the International Correspondence Schools. I now hold the position of Superintendent in the Cotton Mills of The Courtenay Manufacturing Company.

The I. C. S. have been a great aid to me.

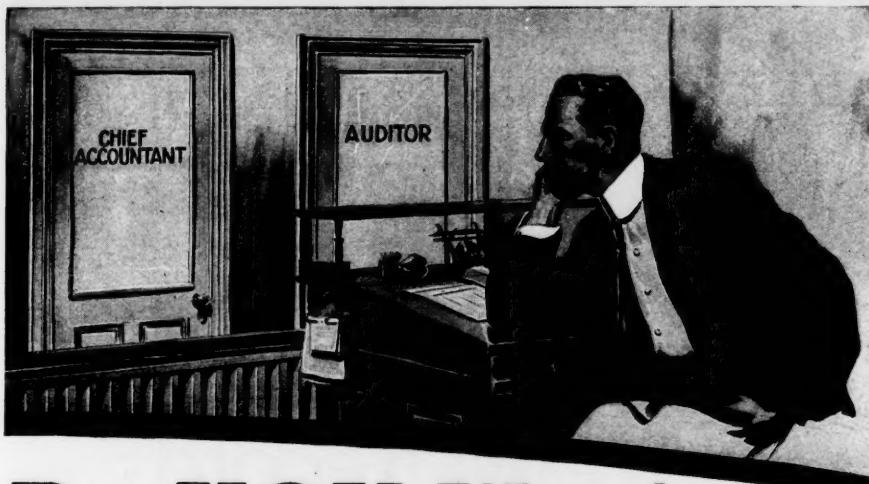
G. B. BYRD, Newry, Oconee Co., S. C.

At the beginning of my study for Architecture I was working as a Cowhand on the Z. Z. Ranch. After receiving my diploma, I went into partnership with an Architect and was very successful, and later dissolved partnership and moved out here where I am running an office of my own.

I have good prospects ahead, and am already snowed under with work. It has increased my salary over 100 per cent since I enrolled with the I. C. S.

R. R. PAIGE, Blanca, Colorado.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



Do YOU Want

Mark the coupon and learn how the I. C. S. can change you from a dissatisfied to a satisfied man—how it can fit you *for your chosen occupation*—raise your salary—make you successful.

The I. C. S. can do all this. This is proved by the 300 letters received *every month* from students who VOLUNTARILY report better salaries and positions *as the direct result of I. C. S. help*. During August the number was 387.

Your advancement rests with YOU. The first step forward is the marking of the coupon. The I. C. S. method is adapted to meet *your* particular needs and means. Read the following testimonials and mark the coupon NOW.

Positions "Higher Up"

When I first took up your Course I was a Machine Shop Clerk at Montreal Cotton Company, Valleyfield, P. Q., Canada. After finishing, I obtained a position of Draftsman there, opportunity just vacant, stayed there 18 months and then a change of management caused me to leave. I obtained a position as Draftsman in the engineering department of the American Building & Construction Makers, Pawtucket, R. I. I kept my position all through the late time of depression and I know I am giving satisfaction.

CHARLES EDW. FOSTER, Chamber St., Valley Falls, R. I.

Within a few months after enrolling I started making show-cards for merchants. The business increased so much that a day did not have enough hours for the work I had on hand. When I was 16 years I was working 12 hours a day, 6 days a week, earning \$6 per week. During the last two years my income increased to double. If my business continues to increase as it has in the last two months, I will be clearing \$100 a month by the end of the year.

J. KING FORREST, 305 E. Ruby St., Argentine, Kans.

I think the International Correspondence Schools is the greatest institution of its kind, and I would not hesitate to recommend any of its courses to any student who might be interested in the same. When I started to study through you I was earning \$6 per week, and less than three years was earning almost three times that amount, and I hope to make still more in the near future.

I would also like to state that on May 1, 1909, another Architect and myself will open an office in New York City.

E. E. SEDILLE, 230 First St., Newark, N. J.

"Better Position" Coupon

International Correspondence Schools, Box 899 D, SCRANTON, PA.

Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I have marked X.

Book keeper	Mechanical Draftsman
Stenographer	Telephone Engineer
Advertisement Writer	Elec. Lighting Supt.
Show Card Writer	Mechan. Engineer
Window Trimmer	Plumber & Steam Fitter
Clerical Law	Stationary Engineer
Illustrator	Civil Engineer
Drafter & Craftsman	Building Contractor
Civil Service	Architect
Cook	Structural Engineer
Textile Mill Supt.	Baskin
Electrician	Mining Engineer
Elec. Engineer	

Name _____

Street and No. _____

City _____ State _____

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

unless your Edison Phonograph is equipped to play Amberol Records

you are missing a lot of good things. Your present Phonograph will give you three times as much pleasure as it does now if you will arrange for the Amberol attachment—three times as much, because an Amberol Record is twice as long and more than twice as good as a Standard Edison Record.

All Edison Phonographs made since the invention of Amberol Records are equipped to play both the Standard or two-minute and the Amberol or four-minute Records.

All Edison Phonographs made before this time play only Standard Records unless they have been equipped with the Amberol attachment.

This attachment can be put on any Edison Phonograph by your dealer or by yourself, making available an already large list of four-minute Amberol selections.

For a small sum—\$4.00, \$5.00 or \$7.50, according to the style of your machine—you practically get an entirely new Phonograph out of your old one, one that is able to play the world's best music, reproduced on the longest records ever made and the most perfect playing Records.

While the Standard list has the best selections that can be given in two minutes, there are many pieces of music that cannot be reproduced in this time at all and are only available for the longer Amberol Records.

If you have never heard any Amberol Records, pick out from the following list some Records that particularly interest you, go to the nearest Edison dealer on October 25th and hear them played upon an Edison Phonograph with the Amberol attachment. Any dealer will be glad to do this for you.

November Amberol Records

- 285 Stars and Stripes Forever March** (Sousa) **Sousa's Band**
One of Sousa's most popular marches, played by his own band.
- 286 Just Plain Folks** (Stonehill) **Ada Jones and Chorus**
An appealing ballad, with appropriate musical setting. Miss Jones has the assistance of a male quartette in the chorus.
- 287 Selections from "Little Nemo"** (Herbert)
Victor Herbert and his Orchestra
This selection introduces his "March of the Valentines," "Won't you be my Playmate," "Give us a Fleet," "Won't you be my Valentine," "The Slumberland Theme," Dance and March Finale.
- 288 How She Gets Away With It Is More Than I Can See** (Furth & Cameron) **Grace Cameron**
A comic song in which one "chorus lady" roasts another. Miss Cameron is very clever in her use of the "front row" vernacular.
- 289 Flannigan and Harrigan (Original)** **Porter & Meeker**
A side-splitting side-walk conversation between these clever artists, introducing two original songs.
- 290 Gypsy Airs** (Sarasate Op. 20) **Albert Spaulding**
This beautiful composition is exquisitely rendered by Mr. Spaulding as a violin solo. Piano accompaniment.
- 291 Grandma's Mustard Plaster (Original)** **Murry K. Hill**
A very funny monologue precedes a song about the wonderful drawing qualities of "Grandma's Mustard Plaster."
- 292 Waiting and Watching for Me** (Hearn & Blis)
Anthony & Harrison
One of the best known and most popular of sacred hymns.
- 293 Eglantine Caprice** (Van Look) **United States Marine Band**
A captivating number executed in faultless style by this celebrated organization.
- 294 Pansies Mean Thoughts, Dear, and Thoughts Mean You** (Brown & Spencer) **Manuel Romain**
Mr. Romain has given a particularly fine rendition of this dainty love ballad.
- 295 A Thousand Leagues Under The Sea** (Branen & Petrie) **Gus Reed**
Mr. Reed's sonorous bass is admirably qualified to give to this selection its proper expression.
- 296 Lascas** (F. Desprez) **Edgar L. Davenport**
A poem of love and heroism familiar to many, but few possibly have ever heard it so well rendered. Given in its entirety.
- 297 Just Before The Battle, Mother** (Root) **Will Oakland and Chorus**
Mr. Oakland's splendid voice has never been heard to better effect than in this war ballad.
- 298 He Leadeth Me** (Gilmore & Bradbury) **Edison Mixed Quartette**
A sacred selection rendered by a quartette of mixed voices with organ accompaniment.
- 299 Wedding—Dance Waltz** (Lincke) **American Symphony Orchestra**
A well known waltz by the author of "Glow-worm" (Amberol Record 61.)
- 300 The Song I Heard One Sunday Morn** (Ellison & Brennan) **James F. Harrison and Mixed Chorus**
This song describes the effect that the chanting of "The Palms" in a church produced on a passer-by.
- 301 Run, Brudder Possum, Run!** (Johnson & Johnson) **Collins and Harlan**
A typical Southern "darkey" song set to a rollicking air.
- 302 Carnival of Venice** (Paganini-Banner) **Olivotti Troubadours**
A charming violin and guitar duet by accomplished musicians.
- 303 My Old Kentucky Home** (Foster) **Knickerbocker Male Quartette**
We doubt the possibility of a more pleasing reproduction of this fine old Southern melody.
- 304 A Georgia Barn Dance** (Mills) **New York Military Band**
An unusual good dance number as well as a fine band Record.

Ask your dealer for a complete list of Amberol Records and see what wonderful pieces of music you are now losing for lack of a simple attachment.

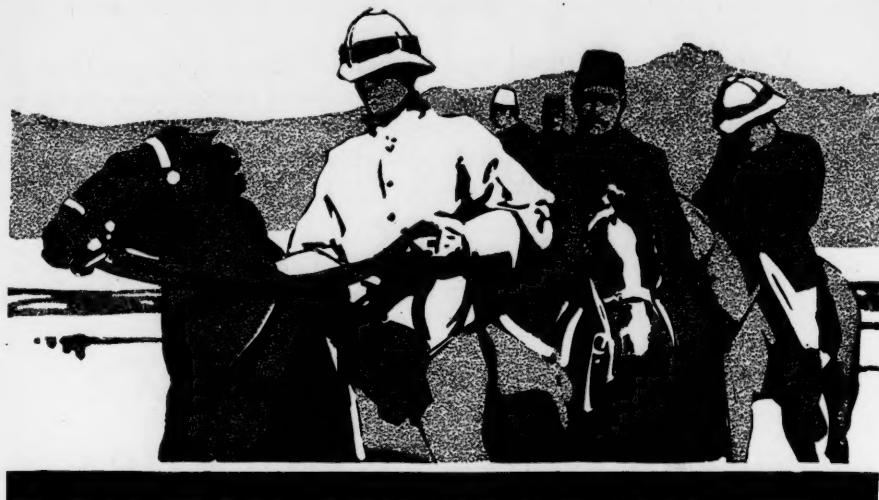
Edison Phonographs are the same price everywhere in the United States.
\$12.50 to \$125.00.

Edison Standard Records 35c; Edison Amberol Records (twice as long)
50c; Edison Grand Opera Records 75c.

NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH CO., 37 Lakeside Avenue, Orange, N. J.



Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



We Have 1,500 Men in Turkey

—and our own buyers, on horseback, visit thousands of farms, skillfully testing the tobacco.

They pick out unerringly the leaves with the choicest aroma, then buy direct from the planter.

Thus we save merchants' profits, and get the very cream of the crop.

That is why no cigarettes in the world, with the Murad flavor, sell at the Murad price.

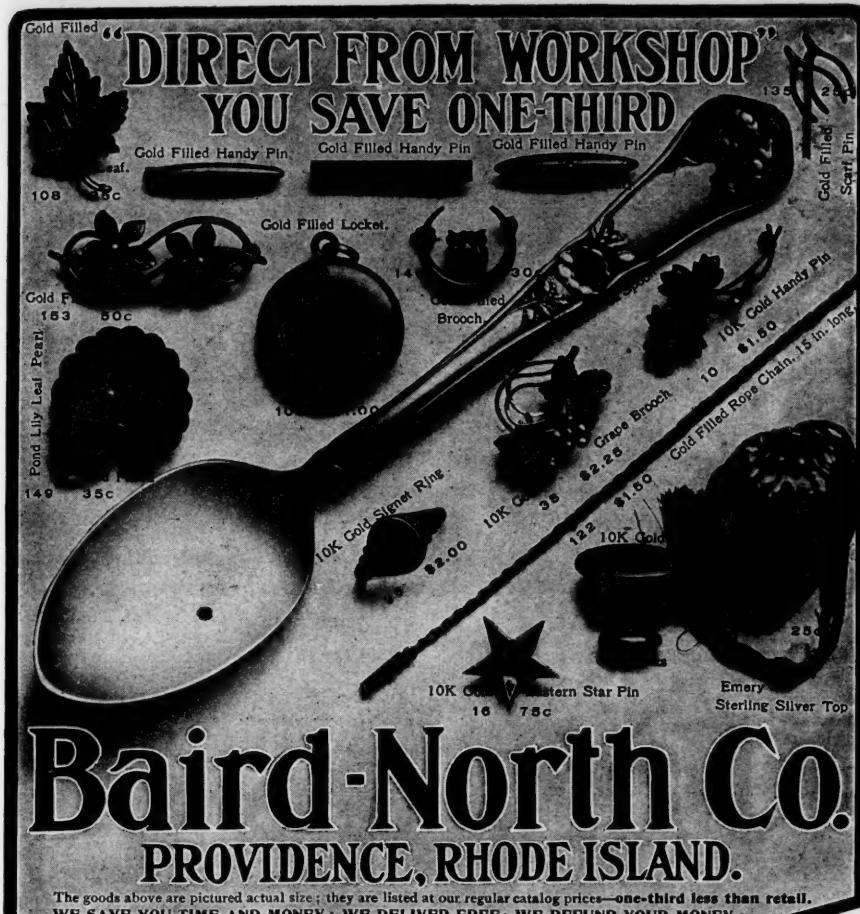
MURAD

CIGARETTES

10 for 15 cents

S. ANARGYROS, New York
A CORPORATION

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."



WE SAVE YOU TIME AND MONEY; WE DELIVER FREE; WE REFUND YOUR MONEY PROMPTLY IF YOU ARE NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED WITH YOUR PURCHASE.

You save one-third: Because we manufacture at a low cost; because we do business on a strictly cash basis and suffer no losses from bad accounts; because you are buying "**direct from workshop**". We save and give you the profits of the jobber and the retailer.

You save time and much inconvenience, whether you live in the country or in the city, by selecting your holiday gifts and other purchases from our FREE 176 page catalog. Over 10,000 articles are shown, giving you in your own home a selection greater than is offered by the largest city stores.

You take no risk — we prepay postage or express charges — we guarantee safe delivery, honest values, and fair treatment. Your money is returned if you are not entirely satisfied with your purchase.

Our reliability is fully established—otherwise this publication would not accept our advertisement. We have sold reliable goods by mail for **fourteen years**; we have thousands of **satisfied customers** in every state. For twelve years we were in Salem, Mass., and during the past two years we have been located in Providence, R. I. Write to our bankers—see what they say: Phenix Nat'l Bank; Mechanics Nat'l Bank, both of Providence, R. I.

BAIRD-NORTH CO., 757 Broad St., Providence, R. I.

**OUR
CATALOG**
is a big book of
real full information.
for Christmas suggestions,
pictures and graduation gifts.
Advice and descriptions given for
jewelry, Silverware, Lenox China,
Caskets and Novelties.
As a trial price, we will send you
above, or any article in our catalog
number, or choice of one of the 26, handy to insure
duplication. Please pay here for less margin. U. S. stamp paid
by mail. Our **coupons** will be good for a year.
**BALD-WORTH CO. 757 BROAD STREET, PROVIDENCE,
RI.** PLEASE SEND US FREE E. YOUR NEW CLOTHING
CONTAINING 10,000 CLOTHES CATALOGUE
Name..... Street..... City..... State.....

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

While the
Fireman
Swings His Ax

is no time to begin to wonder
if your insurance is all right.
You should know now. Don't
put off a day looking up your policies.
If they are in the Hartford don't worry.
For 99 years it has promptly paid every
honest loss. If not in the Hartford and
they are to expire soon—as a re-
minder just make a note on
the margin like this

Insure in the Hartford
Agents Everywhere

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— Gold Edges —
NEW DESIGNS
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BICYCLE
PLAYING CARDS
The Most Durable
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More Sold Than All
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LARGE INDEXES

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GRESS WRAPPERS OR 6 FLAP ENDS OF BICYCLE CASES
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The
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Hoffman House
MADISON SQUARE, NEW YORK
Absolutely Fireproof

The finest type of modern hotel architecture in New York. Beautifully furnished. Comfort and luxurious ease.

Located in the very heart of New York, where all the life and fashion of the metropolis's centre.

Room \$1.50 and \$2.00
Room and Bath \$2.50 and upward
Parlor, Bedroom and Bath \$5.00
Service and cuisine far famed for their excellence. Delightful music afternoon and evening.

Send for particulars and hand-some booklet.

A. A. CADDAGAN
Managing Director

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

DIAMONDS



Ladies' 14k Solid Gold
Solitaire
Diamond Ring
Fashionable Mounting
\$5 a Month

No. 33

ON CREDIT

Our Diamond Specials

Our Christmas Specials

Ideal Presents that last forever



\$50

Gentlemen's Heavy 14k
Solid Gold Solitaire
Diamond Ring
Fashionable Mounting

270

Write for Our Handsome Christmas Catalog containing over 1500 photographic illustrations of beautiful suggestions for Christmas Gifts. Diamond Rings, Pins, Brooches and Earrings, Chatelaine Watches, Silverware, etc., for Wife, Sweetheart, Sister or Mother. Sparkling Diamond Studs, Scarf Pins and Cut Buttons, Watches, Fobs, etc., for Husband, Father or Brother. With its aid you can select in the privacy of your home suitable Gifts for all.

Any Person of honest intentions, no matter how far away he or she may live, may open a Confidential Charge Account for a Diamond, Watch, or other valuable article of jewelry, and pay for same in monthly payments. The Loftis System makes any honest person's credit good by adjusting terms to meet their earnings or income.

An Account With Us is a confidential matter. We require no security charge no interest, impose no penalties and create no publicity. Our customers use their charge accounts with us year after year, finding them a great convenience at such times as Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. We have no disagreeable preliminaries or vexatious delays. Everything is pleasant, prompt, and guaranteed to be satisfactory. We want your account.

Our Prices are 10 to 15 per cent lower than those of the ordinary spot cash retail jeweler. We are direct importers, buying our Diamonds in the rough, which we cleave, cut and polish in our own work shops. In buying from us you save the profits of broker, jobber, wholesaler and retailer.

To the Cash Buyer of Diamonds we have a proposition which is thoroughly characteristic of our house. It is nothing less than a written agreement to return the full amount paid us for a Diamond—less ten per cent, at any time within one year. Thus one might wear a fifty dollar Diamond for a whole year, then send it back and get \$45, making the cost of wearing the Diamond for one year less than ten cents per week.

Our Handsome Souvenir Booklet, telling all about "How Easily You Can Wear and Own a Diamond on the Lortis System," will be sent free on request. The Diamond is the emblem of success.

**THE OLD RELIABLE, ORIGINAL
DIAMOND AND WATCH CREDIT HOUSE.**

BRICKS AND WATCH CREDIT HOUSE,
Dept. P558, 92 to 98 State St., CHICAGO, ILL.
BRANCH STORES—Pittsburg, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo.

BRANCH STORES—Pittsburg, Pa., and St. Louis, Mo.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you. I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION

Rate, \$2.25 a line, which includes AINSLEE'S and POPULAR Magazines, making a total of 4,000,000 readers—the cheapest and best Classified Advertising medium on the market. Next issue of SMITH'S closes November 8th.

Agents & Help Wanted

LADY SEWERS wanted to make up shields at home; \$10 per 100; can make two an hour; work sent prepaid to reliable women. Send reply envelope for information to Universal Co., Desk R, Philadelphia, Pa.

AGENTS WANTED in every county to sell the Transparent Handle Pocket Knife. Big commission paid. From \$75 to \$300 a month can be made. Write for terms. Novelty Cutlery Co., No. 15 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

AGENTS—\$75 Monthly, metal Combination Rolling Pin, 9 articles combined; lightning seller; sample free. Forshee Mfg. Co., box 213, Dayton, O.

ELECTRIC GOODS, Big Cat 3 cts. Undersell all. Fortune for agents. Battery Lamps, lanterns, motors, fans. Ohio Electric Works, Cleveland, O.

AGENTS:—If I Knew Your Name, I would send you our \$2.19 sample outfit free this very minute. Let me start you off with immediate business. You do not need one cent of capital. Experience unnecessary. 50 per cent profit. Credit given. Premiums. Freight paid. Chance to win \$500. in gold extra. Every man and woman should write me for free outfit. Jay Black, Pres., 13 Beverly Street, Boston, Mass.

SALESMAN wanted to handle an exceptionally attractive real estate and timber proposition, which can be sold on annual, semi-annual or monthly installments. We furnish inquiries and good strong literature. Capable, aggressive and energetic man can make a very desirable connection with the largest and strongest house in its line in the country. Sacramento Valley Imp. Co., St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS GET BUSY. OUR BIG XMAS MONEY-MAKERS are winners. Just out—attractive assortment of perfumes, cold creams, sachet, soap, etc., with premiums, have the flash that gives the money. 1 to 6 sales in every home. 100 to 300 per cent profit. Buy from the Manufacturer and save money. Get Busy for the Holiday trade. Each day's delay means \$10 lost. Write now for exclusive territory and profit-sharing plan. Davis Soap Co., 19 Union Park Ct., Chicago.

LADIES to sell and make shields; material furnished. Send stamped envelope full particulars. Dept. Q. Mutual Supply House, Chicago.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

Agents and Help Wanted—Continued.

AGENTS to sell Ladies Novelty Embroid. Waist Patt. Kimonos, Silk Shawls, Scarfs, Mexican Drawn Work, Battenberg, Cluny, Russian Lace, Europ. & Orient Novelty. Ask for Cat. S. Bonan, Dep. D. 143 Liberty St. N.Y.C.

WANTED—Railway Mail Clerks, City Carriers, Postoffice Clerks, Examinations everywhere November 17th. Salary \$100. Annual vacation No "layover." Commercial education sufficient. Coaching free. Write for schedule. Franklin Institute, Dept. L, Rochester, N. Y.

AGENTS. Portraits 35c. Frames 15c, sheet pictures 1c, stereoscopes 25c, views 1c. 30 days credit. Samples & Catalog Free. Consolidated Portrait Dept. 1158, 1027 W. Adams St., Chicago.

BE YOUR OWN BOSS.—Start Mail Order business at home; devote whole or spare time. We tell you how. Very little profit. Everything furnished. No Catalog outfit preposition. Write at once for our "Started" and free particulars. Address T. S. Krueger Co., 155 Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE wanted—Splendid income assured right man to act as our representative after learning our business thoroughly by mail. Former experience unnecessary. All we require is honesty, ability, ambition and willingness to learn a lucrative business. No soliciting or traveling. This is an exceptional opportunity for a man in your section to get into a big paying business without capital and become independent for life. Write at once for full particulars. E. R. Marden, Pres. The Nat'l. Co Op. Real Estate Co., Suite 338, Marden Bldg., Washington, D. C.

1218 of our men average \$6.92 profit per day selling "Wear-Ever" aluminum specialties. Few of these men had any previous selling experience. Work made pleasant by our 175 page instruction book. No door to door canvassing. Let us show you what others have done. Address Desk 54, Aluminum Cooking Utensil Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.

NEW ART—Fascinating rapid money maker. You can decorate china, burnt wood, pillow tops, anything, plain or colored from photographs. No talent required. Send stamp for information. E. E. Vallance Co., Elkhart, Ind.

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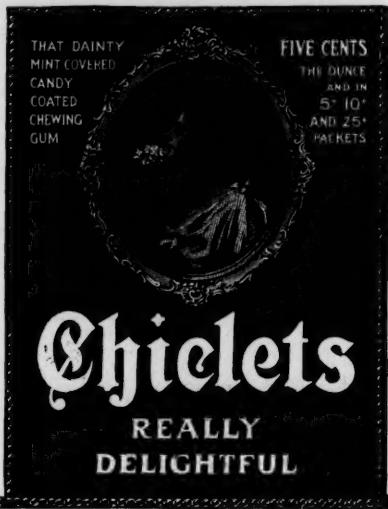


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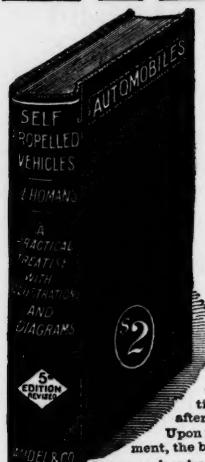
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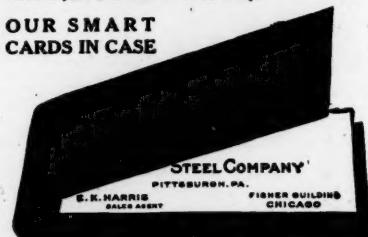
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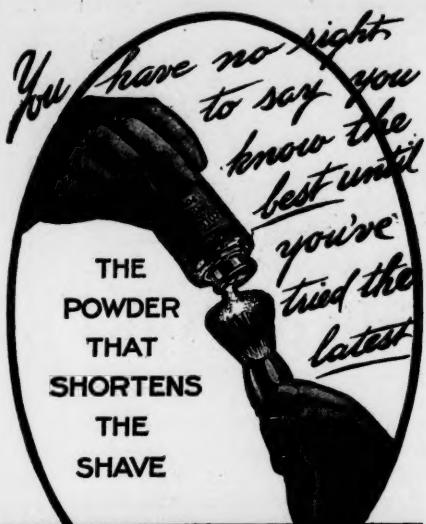
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If deaf, mail us the coupon below and we will send you at once our offer of a **Full Month's Home Test** of a Stolz Electrophone. The Improved Stolz Electrophone (cost \$40.00) is perfect, is a tiny but powerful electrical hearing device. It is "almost invisible" because it is in the clothing and leaves both hands free. It magnifies sound-reveres aided hearing power instantly—renders makeshift drums, etc., useless—stops ear noises, and, in time, usually restores the unaided hearing itself.

Get an Electrophone and experience for yourself how easily it will make you hear—anywhere—without strain or effort. Send coupon now for our offer and long list of satisfied users, who will answer your inquiries. Endorsed by bankers, rulers, presidents and many famous people.

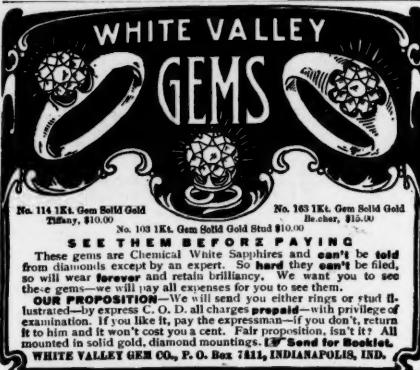
STOLZ ELECTROPHONE CO., 161 STOLZ BLDG., CHICAGO
Branch offices in Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Seattle, Indiana, Oils, Des Moines, Toronto, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, Boston, New York.

FILL IN - TEAR OUT & MAIL

STOLZ ELECTROPHONE CO., 161 Stolz Building, Chicago, Illinois. Send me without obligation on my part full particulars of your Home Test of a latest improved Stolz Elec rophone as published in Dec., '99, Smith's Magazine—D.

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Address.....



No. 103 1Kt. Gem Solid Gold Tiepin, \$10.00

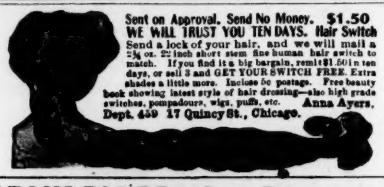
No. 163 1Kt. Gem Solid Gold Brooch, \$10.00

SEE THEM BEFORE PAYING

These gems are Chemical White Sapphires and can't be told from diamonds except by an expert. So hard they can't be filed, so will wear forever and retain brilliancy. We want you to see these gems—we will pay all expenses for you to see them.

OUR PROPOSITION—We sell to C. O. D. all persons who enter into our trade, and we give you the privilege of examination. If you like it, pay the expressman—if you don't, return it to him and it won't cost you a cent. Fair proposition, isn't it? All mounted in solid gold, diamond mountings. **15% Sent for Booklet.**

WHITE VALLEY GEM CO., P. O. Box 7411, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.



IT PAYS BIG To Amuse The Public With Motion Pictures

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY as our instruction Books and "Business Guide" tell all. A trivial knowledge of the business of exhibiting Posters, etc. Humorous dramas brimful of fun, travel, history, religion, temperance work and songs illustrated. One man can do it. All the equipment you need is in any local dealer. A man with a little money to start in churches, school houses, lodge halls, theaters, etc. and to **Five Cent Theatres** in store operate Picture Firms and Feeding Saloons. Profits \$10 to over \$100 per night. Others do it, why not you? It's easy; write to us, we'll tell you how. Catalog free.

AMUSEMENT SUPPLY CO., 822 Illinois Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

"Don't Envy a Good Complexion; Use POMPEIAN and Have One"

YOU will never know the reasons for Pompeian popularity—how clean you can be and look—how refreshed, healthy and wholesome in appearance—until you test Pompeian. Rub it on your moistened face, well into the pores; a few moments of massaging, and out comes the cream many shades darker than when applied. You are astonished—never suspected that so much dirt was in the skin, despite soap-and-water scrubbing.

Glance in your mirror—the old sallow "dead skin" appearance has gone, and in place is a skin with the freshness and smoothness of perfect health and youth.

POMPEIAN MASSAGE CREAM

"The Standard Face Cream"

"Don't *envy* a good complexion; use Pompeian and *have one*." If you wish to try before you buy, send 6c in coin or stamps for a trial jar. Or read poster-calendar offer below, and send 16c for trial jar and a copy of "Pompeian Beauty."

Send for 1910 "Pompeian Beauty" Poster-Calendar

Our lavender-and-gold 1910 Poster-Calendar panel is 3 feet high and 7½ inches wide. The small reproduction of "Pompeian Beauty," as shown on the right, gives but a faint idea of the exquisite detail of color and costume. No advertising matter is printed on front of panel—just the artist's name-plate as you see it in the small reproduction herewith. 1910 Calendar is printed on rear to permit of artistic framing, but the panel effect obviates the necessity of framing. A loop at top permits easy hanging. This "Pompeian Beauty" girl will be the Poster-Calendar sensation of 1910. The supply is limited—send for one early enough to avoid disappointment. Write now before you lay this paper aside. Enclose 10c in coin or stamps. For 16c we will send a trial jar of Pompeian Massage Cream, the standard face cream, and "Pompeian Beauty," 3 feet high and in lavender and gold. You may order either or both.

Pompeian for Men

READ WHAT USERS SAY:

1. "Makes shaving a success."—Mr. J. H. M., Portland, Me.
2. "Makes your face clean and clear on the morning after."—Mr. J. H. M., Nashua, N. H.
3. "Clears the skin like a month in the mountains."—Mr. D. R. F., Philadelphia, Pa.
4. "Introduces you to your handsomer self."—Mr. L. L. G., Buffalo, N. Y.
5. "A neck-easer for the close shaver."—Mr. F. H. S., New York City.

The above lines are a few of the many thousands entered in a recent contest for the best lines describing the merits and benefits of Pompeian Massage Cream. Get Pompeian to-day at your druggist's or have it used at your barber's. Look for "Pompeian" on the jar. There are countless cheap, injurious imitations on which the barber makes more money—at your expense.

Pompeian rubs in and rolls out, cleansing the pores as even soap and water can not. The dead-skin "old-man" look departs with it.

A TRIAL JAR sent for 6c in coin or stamps. Why not send 16c to-day for poster-panel and trial jar? Read description above.

Sold by 50,000 dealers—used in 40,000 high-class barber shops.

Dealers Everywhere; 50c, 75c and \$1

THE POMPEIAN MFG. CO., 14 Prospect Street, Cleveland, Ohio



SEE POSTER CALENDAR OFFER

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

The Best of Xmas Gifts—A DIAMOND

Is there any gift for man or woman so acceptable, so much to be desired, or so permanently valuable as a really fine diamond?

If you wish to confer upon anyone this most beautiful of Christmas gifts or to have for your own use the very finest grade of Blue White Stone in any setting you wish, our system of selling you

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

At Lowest Importers' Prices

Brings our goods within reach of all.

We are one of the largest diamond dealers in the world. We import our stones in the "rough" and finish them here. We buy for spot cash in enormous quantities. Instead of counting on a few sales at big prices, we figure on a mass of sales at small profits. That's why we can sell you diamonds 20% lower than any other dealers.

We furnish diamonds on credit to any reputable man or woman on these terms:

20% with order and 10% per month.

You have the privilege of exchanging your purchase at its full value. All transactions strictly confidential. Any article here illustrated or in our catalog No. 89 sent express prepaid for your examination, returnable at our expense if not perfectly satisfactory.

Send at once for our beautiful 65-page Christmas catalog No. 89. It's free. Select your diamond before Christmas and get it on credit. Special Holiday Discount of 10% on all Cash Purchases.

J. M. LYON & CO.
71-73 Nassau Street New York City

FACTORY PRICE
\$7.50
SELLS RETAILS FOR
\$12.00

BENNETT'S
FACTORY JEWELERS
71-73 Nassau Street
New York City

Solitaire Diamond (4 carat) 14-k Gold Gold Ring (No. 100 in our catalog). Price \$12.00. Send for our illustrated catalog T, containing 1200 to 1500 articles. Watches, jewelry, etc., sold at prices most dealers have to pay for them. The very price—saving you two profits. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

BENNETT MFG. CO., 175 Broadway, N. Y.

NOTICE

I resigned my position as Treasurer of the NEW YORK TRIBUNE after having been associated with that paper for forty years. My opportunity has at last arrived where I can make all the money I am legitimately entitled to. I am interested in a Gold Mine and I have associated with men of noted mining experience. I want all my old Tribune subscribers to write and let me tell them about it.

NATHANIEL TUTTLE, 100 Broadway, New York.

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

THE "KLEAN" PIPE gives you a full, clean smoke. It's cool and fragrant as the first—no wet tobacco smoke. Fine tobacco can soak into the tobacco to bite your tongue or disgust your taste. Push up bottom with finger to clean off ashes and

Only 50c, Postpaid

keep fire at top exposed to the air. Handsome bowl, encasing clear lining in aluminum tube below for reserve tobacco. Bottom stem can be removed and pipe thoroughly cleaned. Dealers can't supply you—send to me. Price postpaid, 50c each (two for \$1)—stamps will do—sat-satisfaction guaranteed. Catalog free on application.

(Patented) M. D. GATES, 305 N. East Ave., OAK PARK, ILL.

Rémo Diamond

Looks like a diamond—wears like a diamond—brilliance guaranteed forever. Looks like a diamond and wears like a diamond. Has no paste, foil or artificial backing. Set only in solid gold mountings. 1-20th the cost of diamonds. A marvelously reconstructed gem—sent on approval. Write for our catalog De Luxe, it's free.

Rémo Jewelry Company, 437 N. Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.



Copyrighted 1909 by L. Adler, Bros. & Co.

The One Book That All Men Want

Hundreds of thousands of men each season look for the Adler-Rochester Book.

Here, as nowhere else, are shown the styles that men of refinement wear.

Here the young men and the older get their best ideas on clothes for every occasion.

But our new fashion book—for fall and winter—is the best that we ever produced.

The plates are in actual colors. The styles have been gathered by our own designers from every fashion center.

It has cost us \$25,000 to get these designs and show them. Yet the book is free.

After Forty Years

Since 1869, Adler-Rochesters have held their place as the top-most clothes in America. Yet they are, and must always be, the garments of the few.

Not because of their price, for they cost like other high-grade makes. Our suits and overcoats run from \$18 up.

We spend on the making four times what some makers spend, but we sell on a profit of six per cent. Our average profit is 97 cents per suit.

But these clothes are made by experts—made with infinite care. And such men are so rare that we cannot make clothes for the many.

So we sell to one dealer in each city and town, and sell him but part of his stock. The men who get these clothes are the men who insist on them.

See What the Best-Dressed Wear

Our Book shows accurately what the best-dressed wear. There is no other book to compare with it.

It shows 27 new creations.

Simply write us a postal and say "Send Book No. 19." Do it now.

(3)

L. ADLER, BROS. & CO., Rochester, N. Y.

Adler-Rochester Clothes

Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

The Comfort of the Telephone



The Bell System has become the *nervous system* of the business and social world.

The comfort it affords the women in the homes of America cannot be measured.

Do you measure it in considering the value of your Bell telephone?

The mother of children can find out where they are at any particular hour of the day—and how they are—even though their visits carry them to the country village or the city hundreds of miles away.

The husband on a trip talks from his hotel room to his wife at home.

There is a world of comfort in the knowledge that you can talk together at a moment's notice, wherever you may be.

The Bell Long Distance service offers, ready recruited for your call, the largest body of active business men in the world. If you have a telephone, avail yourself of its long distance possibilities.

The highest type of public service can be achieved *only by one policy, one system, universal service.*

**The American Telephone and Telegraph Company
And Associated Companies**

Every Bell Telephone Is the Center of the System

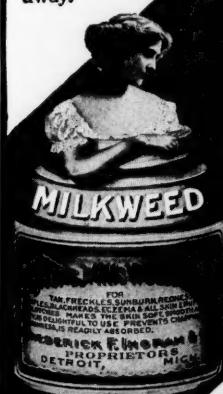
Tell the substitutor: "No, thank you, I want what I asked for. Good-bye."

MILKWEED CREAM

We want every woman in America to send for a **free sample** of Milkweed Cream and our booklet telling of the wonderful results that follow its daily use. Write today before you forget.

This is the one toilet cream that has proved its merit.

Milkweed Cream is not a new thing. Your grandmother used it and her matchless complexion testified to its worth. It is nature's own aid to beauty—a skin tonic. A very little applied gently to the face, neck and hands, night and morning, cleans out the tiny pores, stimulates them to renewed activity and feeds and nourishes the inner skin and surrounding tissues. The certain result of this is a complexion clear and brilliant in coloring—a skin soft and smooth without being shiny—plump, rounded cheeks from which all lines and wrinkles have been taken away.



Milkweed Cream is good for all complexion faults. It

has a distinct therapeutic action on the skin and its glands. Excessive rubbing

or kneading is not only unnecessary, but is liable to stretch the skin and cause wrinkles. Milkweed Cream

is absorbed by the skin like dry ground absorbs rain. Thus the pores are not clogged up, irritated or enlarged as they are by having stuff forced into them by rubbing. Milkweed Cream is dainty, fastidious and refined—a necessary toilet luxury for every woman who values her personal appearance.

Sold by all druggists at 50 cents and \$1.00 a jar, or sent postpaid on receipt of price. Don't forget to write for the free sample.

FREDERICK F. INGRAM CO., 68 Tenth Street, DETROIT, MICH.

IMPROVES BAD COMPLEXIONS PRESERVES GOOD COMPLEXIONS



THE BEST PRESENT on the List—and the best anywhere for \$1.75, because all the Family enjoy it all the year—a subscription for the 1910 volume of

SOME GOOD THINGS FOR NEXT YEAR

- 50** STAR ARTICLES—Contributions to Useful Knowledge, by Men at the Ladder's Top.
- 250** CAPITAL STORIES—Serial Stories, Stories of Character, Adventure and Heroism.
- 300** CONTRIBUTORS—Men and Women distinguished in every Walk of Life.
- 1000** UP-TO-DATE NOTES on Current Events and Discoveries in Nature and Science.
- 2000** ONE-MINUTE STORIES—Anecdotes, Editorials, Miscellany, Children's Page, etc.

Send for Sample Copies of the Paper and Illustrated Announcement for 1910

CHRISTMAS PRESENT COUPON.

THE YOUTH'S COMPANION, BOSTON, MASS.